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# THE INSTITUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY,

EXHIBITED IN THEIR SCRIPTURAL CHARACTER  
AND PRACTICAL BEARING.

BY  
THOMAS JACKSON.

“It is highly necessary that we remind ourselves how great presumption it is to make light of any Institutions of Divine appointment; that our obligations to obey all God's commands whatever are absolute and indispensable; and that commands merely positive, admitted to be from Him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them; an obligation moral in the strictest and most proper sense.”—BUTLER.

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## PREFACE.

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A STRICT and conscientious observance of the Institutions of Christianity, as they are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, is essential to the Christian character in its complete form. The tribes of Israel were solemnly charged to observe all the laws and ordinances which were given to them by the ministry of Moses, and the people were subjected to severe penalties in case of neglect;—the parents of the holy Baptist, entering into the designs of God, are said to have been “both righteous” before Him, “walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless;”—and certainly the followers of Christ are equally bound to observe the simple, easy, and unexpensive ordinances of the Gospel. To them our Saviour has said, “Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you:” plainly intimating that they are not entitled to this high character, unless their obedience to His will be entire and unreserved, having respect to all that He has



enjoined, both in the form of positive rite, and of moral precept.

As we "must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," and shall stand or fall by His decision, it is both the duty and the interest of every one, in the mean while, with the utmost seriousness and anxiety, to urge the inquiry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and to avail himself of every means in his power to obtain a full and explicit answer from the inspired records; so that his tempers and conduct may be formed according to the purest model, and may in every respect correspond with the Saviour's will. Without this he cannot have "a conscience void of offence," nor can he cherish a well-grounded hope that he shall "find mercy of the Lord in that day."

To afford some assistance to single-minded Christians, who have not sufficient leisure for a course of extensive reading on these matters, and who yet desire to serve God acceptably, this brief manual, the substance of which was written some years ago, is now committed to the press. It contains the honest convictions of the writer as to the meaning of holy Scripture on the several subjects discussed; and, it is hoped, may assist some devout people in their endeavours to ascertain the truth amidst the conflicting opinions of men. The Scripture doctrine of the Sabbath, of the Christian

ministry, of the sacraments, and of the constitution of the church, every one should labour correctly to understand, according to the teaching of holy writ.

It would have been gratifying to the writer to treat these subjects in such a manner as to avoid the appearance of controversy; but this was impossible: the lax opinions of some men concerning the Sabbath, and the intolerant claims of certain ecclesiastics,—who would place a majority of the Protestant denominations out of the pale of Christendom, and assign them a place among the heathen,—call not only for an earnest protest, but also for counter statement and argumentation. If he have in some places expressed himself strongly on the subject of the pastoral office and of church-government, he begs to say that he felt himself to be on his trial, along with his co-religionists; and that, having preached the Gospel and sustained the sacred office for more than sixty years, he is not willing to be ranked with infidels and pagans. Though Nonconformists, to a certain extent, he claims for himself and his brethren of the Methodist community a place in the church which is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone;”—the church against which “the gates of hell shall not prevail;” and in which glory shall be given to the

Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, "throughout all ages, world without end." It has been far from his intention to give offence to any class of Christian people. He claims the right of private judgment and of self-defence; but at the same time he would say, with a Nonconformist of a former generation, "I am aged in the ministry, and by reason of age and experience am not eager for any party, but mellowed with charity towards real Christians" of every name. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!"

LONDON,  
*November 3d, 1868.*





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# THE INSTITUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

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## I.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE SABBATH.

UNDER every dispensation of religion it has pleased God to give mankind appropriate Institutions, not only as an expression of His will, and a test of their submission to His authority, but as means of instruction, of encouragement, and of spiritual growth. In the garden of Eden He gave our first parents “the tree of life,” which is generally regarded as the sacramental sign and pledge of a blessed immortality, which was secured to them as the reward of the obedience they were required to render.

After the fall He appointed animal sacrifice, as a type of the great propitiatory sacrifice of the cross, and as the medium through which the guilty might obtain forgiveness, and His worshippers have free access to Him. Circumcision, and the entire Levitical ceremonial, are to be regarded in the same light. They were not human devices, but gracious ordinances of God, intended to subserve the most important purposes.

The Gospel also has its Institutions. Its Sabbath, its ministry, its sacraments, all bear this character. They are given by God; they declare His will; and the practical observance of them is connected with inesti-



mable benefits, which are in part realised in this world, but will be more fully disclosed in a future state.

The first Institution of Christianity to which we will direct our attention, and which is, in fact, most intimately connected with all the rest, is the SABBATH, without which we can hardly conceive of religion as extensively prevalent in the world.

Considering then the great importance of the Sabbath, and the laxity of opinion and of practice which formerly prevailed with respect to it, and which still unhappily exists, we will take a somewhat comprehensive view of the subject. But before we proceed to a direct examination of the Scripture doctrine of the Sabbath, we deem it requisite to lay down a few propositions, which bear directly upon the subject, and which will prepare us to examine it with increased advantage.

I. The first is, that God is entitled to the religious homage of mankind. He has revealed Himself to us as possessed of absolute perfection, and as the Author and End of all created nature. All things were made by Him, and for Him; and upon Him they continually depend. His design in making these discoveries of Himself is, that His human offspring may render to Him "the glory due unto His name," by incessant praises and thanksgiving, and by presenting to Him their daily supplications and prayers, both for themselves and for one another. Such homage as this He requires, and will accept; and one of the most sacred injunctions of His word is, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. iv. 10.)

At the same time, it must not be forgotten, that there are other duties which require stated seasons of rest and leisure. Such is the study of the Holy Scrip-

tures, self-examination, secret converse with God, devout intercourse with His people, and the communication of religious instruction to other persons, especially the members of our own families. God has given us His word, that we may read it with due attention and care ; we are, to a certain extent, held responsible for the souls of all that are placed within the range of our influence ; and, judging from the example of our blessed Lord, religious retirement is a duty of the highest importance. He rose a great while before day, and retired to a solitary place, and there prayed ; and after the toils of the day He went upon a mountain, and continued all night in prayer to God : and, without a Sabbath, how are persons who labour for their daily bread to find adequate time for secret converse with the Lord their Maker ?

II. Our second proposition is, that worship should be rendered to God in public assemblies, as well as in private families, and in the secrecy of the closet. The Jewish tabernacle and temple were erected, under the Divine command, as places of religious assembling ; “ holy convocations ” are expressly enjoined in the Mosaic law ; and the public worship of God was sanctioned by the example of our blessed Saviour, during the entire period of His spotless and eventful life. As mankind have one common nature, are governed by the same authority, are placed under the same obligations, are redeemed by the same blood, need the same salvation, and can only receive it in the same manner ; it is right in itself, and is in accordance with the will of God, that they should unitedly express their confessions, requests, and thanksgivings to Him, against whom their sins have been committed, and from whom

all their blessings are received. The moral effect of social worship, independently of the command by which it is enjoined, is beneficial in the highest degree, reminding mankind of the common relation in which they stand to God, to Christ, to the Holy Spirit, and to one another ; and of the obligation under which they consequently lie, to practise justice and benevolence in all their intercourse with each other.

III. Our third proposition is, that there must be stated times for public worship, and a general agreement among mankind respecting those times. This proposition is self-evident. The worship of God is the duty not of a part of mankind only, but of the whole. Yet unless they know the times at which the worship of God is appointed to be celebrated, and are impressed with the duty of attendance, such worship can never be regular and general. Some persons might occasionally appear in the house of God, but the multitudes would be unavoidably absent, engaged in the ordinary business of life.

IV. Our fourth proposition is, that there is hence an obvious necessity for a Divine command, directing mankind what proportion of their time should be devoted to sacred purposes. Men themselves are not competent judges in the case ; for their minds are biassed by an evil nature, and by an undue regard for their temporal interests. Since the fall they are doomed to labour, as a means of subsistence ; and if left to their own reasonings and determinations, they would readily conclude that the whole of their time is barely sufficient to provide for themselves, and for those who are dependent upon them. A majority of mankind are employed in servitude, so that they are not at their own disposal ;



and if their masters should require them to devote their whole time to labour, these hapless men, in the absence of a Divine command to the contrary, would have no means of redress, and no opportunity for attending the services of God's sanctuary, but must live and die scarcely elevated above the brute creation. It should also be added, that, since the fall, mankind have become worldly in their spirit, bent upon earthly gain and pleasure, and indisposed to worship God at all. If, therefore, no time were absolutely claimed by God for sacred purposes, we have every reason to believe that few of mankind would spend any part of their time in the discharge of duties of a strictly religious kind, either in public or in secret. On these grounds there is a manifest necessity for the direct interposition of God's authority in the case. It is His prerogative to determine what amount of time shall be spent in labour, and what shall be devoted to duties which have an immediate reference to our spiritual and eternal interests.

V. Our fifth proposition, which is clearly deducible from what has been already advanced, is, that a Divinely-appointed Sabbath is essentially connected with the maintenance of true religion in the world. If mankind were left to determine for themselves how much of their time they shall devote to sacred purposes, considering the calls of business, and the natural alienation of the heart from God, a general neglect of religion would certainly ensue. However zealous the teachers of religion might be, they would unavoidably fail in their attempts to gain access to the masses of mankind, who would occupy their time in labour and in worldly pleasure, without either restraint or fear. If the world must have religion, it must have a Sabbath,

and a Sabbath appointed by God Himself ; for laws that are merely human, however wisely they may be devised, can never effectually bind the consciences of sinful men.\*

With these principles in our recollection, let us now examine the Scripture doctrine of the Sabbath. Since the introduction of sin into the world, there have been three dispensations of revealed truth and grace,—the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Evangelical ; under all of which the Sabbath, that had been previously given to Adam in the garden of Eden, was perpetuated and enjoined, but with certain peculiarities appropriate to each. In order, therefore, to a just and full comprehension of the subject of our present inquiry, we must view it under its three distinct aspects. Our first attention is naturally directed to the Sabbath as it was given under the Patriarchal dispensation ; that is, from the time of Adam to the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai,—a period of about two thousand five hundred years.

But before we speak of the Patriarchal Sabbath, it will be requisite to prove its reality ; for its existence has been strenuously denied, and that by men who claim to speak with authority, and to whose judgment on many other points we are inclined to pay a respectful deference. The men who have, in modern times, excited the greatest degree of attention, by a denial of the Patriarchal Sabbath, are the late Archdeacon Paley,

\* “As for liberty left to the church hereabout, it seemeth so unreasonable to my poor judgment, that, if it were, it should become us by earnest and hearty prayer to seek unto God to take that liberty from us, and be pleased Himself to guide us by some manifest ordinance, to prevent dissension and confusion.”—Twisse’s “Morality of the Fourth Commandment,” p. 138. Edition of 1641.

in his work on "Moral Philosophy," and Dr. Whately, the late Archbishop of Dublin, in a pamphlet which he published some years ago, under the title of "Thoughts on the Sabbath." Both these writers were men of acknowledged ability; and possessing elevated rank in the National Church, their speculations on this subject have done immense harm, especially as they serve to extenuate the sin of Sabbath-breaking, and thus to encourage the worldly and the careless in neglecting the duties of religion, and in pursuing their business and pleasures on the day of the Lord.

The theory to which these two ecclesiastical dignitaries have given the sanction of their names, unhappily is not new. It had many advocates in the disastrous times of Charles the First; and the practical application of it by the King, and by several leading men in the Established Church, was unquestionably one of the principal causes which led to the subversion of the Monarchy, and of the Church itself. By encouraging public sports on the Lord's day, and requiring the Clergy to recommend them from the pulpit and the sacred desk, as we shall afterwards take occasion to show, they shocked and alarmed the public conscience, drove the religious part of the community into a hostile attitude, and induced multitudes of good men to feel that resistance was matter of imperative duty. The theory which was then advocated, and has been since revived, is this:—"That the Sabbath is nothing more than a Jewish institution. It was not known till the Law was given by Moses; and it passed away for ever, with all the other Mosaic rites, when the Gospel was introduced. The religious observance of the Lord's day is not enjoined by the command of God, but is

an ecclesiastical regulation, resting upon human authority. It is, however, attended by many advantages; and it is the duty of Christians to observe it, as they should every similar ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake. But the breach of it is not a violation of the moral law of God, which Christ came to 'fulfil,' and which is established by faith."

Such is the theory of the Sabbath, which is at present entertained by large numbers of men who hold what are called "liberal views of religion." Many of our statesmen and gentry have imbibed these lax opinions, and act upon them; and so do many libertines in our colonies. When we appeal to the Mosaic record in proof that the Sabbath was instituted by God at the time of the creation, and that it was given to all mankind without exception in the person of their great forefather Adam, we are told that there is a prolepsis, or an anticipation, in the sacred narrative; (Gen. ii. 3;) and that the seventh day, although mentioned in connexion with the creation, was not actually blessed and sanctified as a memorial of that great event until the tribes of Israel had passed through the Red Sea, and had commenced their wanderings in the wilderness. In support of this opinion it is alleged that no mention is made of the actual observance of a Sabbath during the whole of the Patriarchal ages, which can only be accounted for on the supposition that such an institution was then unknown.

With this answer no one who duly considers the subject can ever be satisfied. The Book of Genesis was never intended to be a complete history of the times to which it relates. It makes no mention of any original command of God to offer animal sacrifice: yet

such a command was certainly given, or Abel could not have offered his victim "in faith," as St. Paul declares he did; (Heb. xi. 4;) since "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. x. 17.) The Mosaic narrative makes no mention of Enoch's prophetic character; yet St. Jude asserts that he was a prophet, and has recorded one of his predictions, which we have no reason to believe was the only one he ever uttered. The difference between clean and unclean animals was recognised in the time of Noah, and could be known only by revelation from God; yet no law on the subject is recorded in the history of that period. From the time of the fall, penitent and believing men were certainly in the habit of praying to God, both for themselves and others; yet in the Book of Genesis no express example of prayer is recorded, either with respect to Adam, or any of his descendants, till the time of Abraham. The absence of all direct mention of the observance of a Sabbath, therefore, in that sacred book, is no proof that the law of the Sabbath was not given. It might be known and conscientiously observed, although the historian has been silent on the subject. Moses says nothing concerning the hope of heaven by which the patriarchs of the Jewish nation were actuated; yet St. Paul describes them as cherishing such a hope, and as being sustained and cheered by it amidst all their toils and wanderings. (Heb. xi. 10-16.)

Omissions of a similar kind are observable in other historical books of Holy Scripture. Circumcision, the sacramental sign and seal of God's covenant with Abraham, was unquestionably practised by the Hebrew tribes in their successive generations; yet from the



period of their settlement in Canaan, in the time of Joshua, no particular instance of its administration is recorded till the birth of John the Baptist, a period of about fifteen hundred years. Nor does any express mention of the Sabbath occur in the Book of Joshua, of Judges, of Ruth, in the two Books of Samuel, or the First of Kings; although no one can doubt that it was observed during the entire period to which these histories refer. If the Sabbath is not spoken of in this long historical series, no one can be surprised that it is not mentioned in the very summary account which Moses has given of the Patriarchal ages.

The plea, therefore, that there was no law of the Sabbath in the time of the patriarchs, because Moses has not expressly said that those holy men observed the seventh day as a day of sacred rest, is of no force at all; but is a mere assumption, utterly unworthy of the eminent men by whom it has been urged.\* In the absence of all proof to the contrary, we adhere to the plain and common-sense interpretation of the Mosaic record, that the Sabbath was instituted as soon as the creation was finished; and that therefore the law of the Sabbath is coeval with the human race, and binding upon all mankind. Our reasons for this judgment we now proceed to specify.

The truth is, that the words of Moses can be fairly understood in no other sense. Having given an account of the creation, and of the order in which the various classes of beings rose into existence at the command of Almighty God, the inspired historian adds, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work

\* See note A, at the end of the volume.

which He had made ; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it : because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." (Gen. ii. 1-3.)

In reading this important statement the interpretation which naturally, and in the first instance, suggests itself to our minds is, that, as God rested from the work of creation on the seventh day, He blessed and sanctified it at the time of His resting ; and that, as "the Sabbath was made for man," it was given to him at the commencement of his being, and as soon as the work of creation was completed. Understanding the text in this light, it would appear that as Adam was created at the close of the sixth day, the first entire day of his existence was the Sabbath, which he was directed sacredly to observe in honour of God, the Creator of the vast universe, which then appeared in all its freshness and beauty, no blight of sin having fallen upon any visible object. In this view of the subject, innocent and upright man would be impressively taught that the worship, the service, and the enjoyment of God constituted his special calling ; and that every act of his understanding, of his heart, and of his hands, was to be subordinated to these high and holy purposes. He was placed in the garden of Eden, as his rich inheritance, that he might dress and keep it. But this was only a subordinate object of His being. He was made for God ; and before he entered upon any of the other duties of life, he was to devote a whole day, and that the first of his existence, to the worship of the Lord his Maker.

That the text is to be so understood we conceive to be manifest from the general tenor of the narrative of

which it forms a part. We find in the preceding chapter a long series of acts attributed to Almighty God, all of which are recorded precisely in the same manner, and as having taken place in *immediate sequence* to the utterance of His word; no intimation whatever being given of any considerable interval between His mandate and the effect that followed. "And God said, Let there be light: *and there was light.*" "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God *made the firmament, and divided the waters,*" &c. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed," &c. "*And the earth brought forth grass, and the herb yielding seed,*" &c. "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night," &c. "*And it was so.*" "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life," &c. "And God *blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply,*" &c. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind," &c. "*And God made the beast of the earth after his kind,*" &c. "And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness," &c. "*So God created man in His own image,* in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply," &c. "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.*"

Here then we find recorded several acts of God, which are all described as having taken place in direct succession to the declaration of His will. The Almighty utters His word, and the effect immediately follows. He speaks, and the work is done ; for what can withstand Omnipotence ? When the Almighty uttered His voice, light was instantly produced, vegetable nature in all its varieties appeared, and all the races of animals sprang into existence, without any delay. When He blessed the living tribes of earth and air and sea, and when He blessed the first human pair, the effect immediately followed. Is it credible, then, or at all consistent with the Mosaic narrative, that, when He rested on the seventh day, and determined that His example in this respect should be followed by mankind,—to whom He would therefore give every seventh day as a time of holy rest, and as a memorial of what He had done,—that He should defer the fulfilment of His purpose for the long space of two thousand five hundred years ; keeping the matter all this while a profound secret ? This is certainly a conclusion to which the words of the inspired historian will never conduct any unprejudiced reader.

“ It is scarcely possible to conceive a greater violence to the sacred text than is offered by this interpretation. It attributes to the inspired author the absurd assertions, that God rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made, and THEREFORE about two thousand five hundred years after God blessed and sanctified the seventh day ! It may as well be imagined that God had finished His work on the seventh day, but rested on some other seventh day, as that He rested on the day following the work of creation, and afterwards blessed and sanctified another. Not the

slightest evidence appears for believing that Moses followed 'the order of connexion, and not of time;' for no reasonable motive can be assigned for *then* introducing the mention of it, if it was not *then* appointed. The design of the sacred historian clearly is, to give a faithful account of the origin of the world; and both the *resting* on the seventh day, and the *blessing* it, have too close a connexion to be separated. If the one took place immediately after the work of creation was concluded, so did the other. To the account of the production of the universe, the whole narrative is confined; there is no intimation of subsequent events, nor the most distant allusion to Jewish ceremonies; and it would be most astonishing if the writer deserted his grand object to mention one of the Hebrew ordinances, which was not appointed till ages afterwards." "Nothing can be more violent and unnatural than the proleptical interpretation; and, if we add that it rests upon the unproved assumption, that the record in question was written *after* the delivery of the law, it must appear so devoid of critical support, as not to require a moment's hesitation in rejecting it."\*

That the Sabbath was instituted at the time of the creation, and was practically recognised by good men during the patriarchal ages, is confirmed by a large amount of collateral evidence, which we now proceed to adduce.

1. In the patriarchal ages, time was reckoned by weeks; a fact which is unaccountable, except on the supposition of a Sabbath every seventh day, according to the Mosaic account. That time was then reckoned by weeks, is evident from the following

\* Holden's "Christian Sabbath," pp. 49-51. Edition of 1825. See note B, at the end of the volume.



texts:—"For yet SEVEN DAYS, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights." (Gen. vii. 4.) "And he stayed yet other SEVEN DAYS; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark." (Gen. viii. 10.) "And he stayed yet other SEVEN DAYS; and sent forth the dove." (Gen. viii. 12.) "Fulfil her WEEK, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her WEEK." (Gen. xxix. 27, 28.)

The question then arises, What could be the reason for this mode of reckoning? Times and seasons are generally calculated from the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, this being one object of their creation. "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years." (Gen. i. 14.)

A *day* is a natural period of time, and one which we cannot fail to observe; because, according to the appearance of things, the sun completes his circuit round the heavens in twenty-four hours. A *month* is also a natural period of time; because then the moon finishes her various changes, and resumes the aspect which she presented before those changes began. A *year*, too, is a natural period of time; because the seasons are then all completed, and the sun and the earth occupy the positions in which they stood with respect to each other when the year began. Days, and months, and years, then, are divisions of time for which all can account, and indeed are such as cannot escape general observation. They are forced upon the attention of mankind before the very first principles of astronomy are understood.

According to the Mosaic record, the heavenly bodies are “for *days* and *years* ;” but they do not naturally, and of themselves, teach mankind to divide time into weeks : yet it was thus divided from the very earliest ages. It has been intimated that time was early divided into weeks because a week is the fourth part of a month. But why should a month be popularly divided into four parts, any more than into six parts, or eight parts ? When the great principles of the patriarchal religion were lost among the ancient heathen nations, they generally discontinued the practice of calculating time by weeks ; so that the Greeks reckoned it by *decades*, or *ten* days, and the Romans by *nundinæ*, or *nine* days ; although traces of a weekly Sabbath are found in the history of these nations, as well as of other heathen tribes. When the French nation, at the time of the Revolution, renounced the profession of Christianity, they abolished the weekly Sabbath, and reckoned time, not by weeks, but by decades, after the example of the heathen Greeks.

No satisfactory reason for the division of time into weeks has ever been given, except that which deduces it from the Sabbath ; and as this division prevailed from the earliest ages, the conclusion to which we are led is, that the Sabbath was instituted at the time of the creation.\*

The argument is strengthened by the fact, that from very remote ages the number seven was regarded as sacred, and as denoting perfection. Clean beasts were taken into the ark by *sevens*. (Gen. vii. 2.) *Seven* lean kine and *seven* blighted ears of corn were employed to denote so many years of famine ; and *seven* fat kine and

\* See Note C, at the end of the volume.

*seven* full ears of corn to denote *seven* years of plenty, in the dreams of Pharaoh. (Gen. xli. 1-7, 26-30.) When the friends of Job had incurred the righteous displeasure of Almighty God, by their rash speeches concerning His Providence, and by their unjust censures upon that suffering and patient man, they were directed to take *seven* bullocks and *seven* rams, and present them to Him as a burnt-offering, in order to their forgiveness. (Job xlii. 8.) Balaam also required, as the means of bringing a malediction upon the tribes of Israel, the erection of *seven* altars, and *seven* oxen and *seven* rams for sacrifice. (Num. xxiii. 1.) As a means of the overthrow of Jericho, it was directed, "*seven* priests shall bear before the ark *seven* trumpets of rams' horns: and the *seventh* day ye shall compass the city *seven* times." (Joshua vi. 4.) In the Apocalypse we read of *seven* churches, *seven* golden candlesticks, *seven* stars, *seven* lamps, *seven* seals, *seven* angels, *seven* vials, and *seven* last plagues. It would appear also that the Holy Ghost is called "the *seven* Spirits of God," to denote the diversity and perfection of His operations in the church. (Rev. i. 4.)

This peculiar sacredness which is attached to the number seven, and which was attached to it from the earliest periods of the world's history, is the most naturally and satisfactorily accounted for from the appointment of the seventh day as the Sabbath of God, a day of holy rest, to be observed in memory of His rest, when He had in six days finished the creation of the heavens and the earth, with all that they contain. And as time was divided into weeks, and this peculiar character was attached to the number seven, before the giving of the Law by Moses, we conclude that the

Sabbath was instituted as soon as man was created, and received from his Maker the breath of life.

2. Further proof of this fact may be fairly deduced from the declared purpose of the Sabbath. "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He rested from all His work which God created and made." The Sabbath, then, was instituted as a memorial of the creation of the universe by the power of God. We are told that the Sabbath is nothing more than a Jewish ordinance; but are the Jews the only people that are concerned in the work of the creation? Is not God the Father of the spirits of all flesh? Because He is the Creator of all worlds, He is the Lord and Ruler of all worlds; and is therefore to be worshipped and trusted in, adored and loved under that character. Earth and heaven are His work, and are to be contemplated as such, that they may lead the thoughts and affections of men to the great Author of their being. To preserve in the minds of men an habitual recollection of God, as the Creator and Lord of all, the Sabbath was confessedly given; that on every return of that sacred day, they might remember His greatness, His supremacy, His authority,—the power, the wisdom, and the goodness which He has displayed in every work of His hands,—and then bow before Him in humility, obedience, and faith.

These are duties which devolve not upon one particular nation only, but upon all mankind. All the ancient nations were as much the work of God as the Jews were, and were equally bound to honour Him for His creating goodness as were the favoured posterity of Abraham. On this ground we contend that the Sabbath, as a memorial of the creation, was given to all

mankind in the person of Adam, their federal and natural head. The first principles of religious and moral truth are, that God is ONE; and that He is the Creator, and therefore the Lord, of all. To perpetuate the knowledge of these truths, in order to their practical effect, the Sabbath was given; and, as such, we are justified in regarding it as a gracious provision for the good of mankind from the beginning of the world.

With this deduction, the declaration of the Son of God, who is also "the Lord of the Sabbath," is in full agreement.

"THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN." (Mark ii. 27.) The declaration is general and unrestricted, and contains a clear intimation that the Sabbath belongs to man, as man, and that by the will and grant of God. Man in innocence was required, as matter of high privilege, to devote one-seventh part of his time to duties that were exclusively religious. Man, fallen and sinful, is doomed to labour and sorrow, and needs intervals of rest, and of undisturbed reflection; and God has given him every seventh day for these purposes. Man, as a sinner, redeemed by the death of Christ, needs salvation; and God has given him the Sabbath, that he may secure that great benefit, without which he must for ever perish. Man, believing in Christ, and therefore pardoned and sanctified, needs leisure for holy thought, and spiritual exercises; and God has given him the Sabbath, that he may realise a growing meetness for the everlasting rest of heaven. The words of our Saviour teach that the Sabbath belongs to universal man; to men of every age, rank, condition, and character. It was made for man holy and upright, and for man depraved and guilty; for Jewish man, and for man of



the Gentile race ; for man after a written revelation had been received, and for man before alphabetical characters were known, and any inspired book existed. It is one of the richest gifts of our heavenly Father's love ; love which is as wide as the world, and extends through all time. Every human being has a right to say, "The Sabbath was made for ME."

3. Additional evidence in support of the point we are attempting to establish we have in the fact, that the Sabbath is spoken of as a recognised institution before the giving of the Law. The precepts of the moral law, and the manner in which they were given, are recorded in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of the Book of Exodus. But in the sixteenth chapter of that Book, containing an account of various transactions which took place before the tribes of Israel came to Sinai, and before the Almighty Lawgiver descended in majesty and terror upon that mountain, we find a distinct and explicit recognition of the Sabbath as an ordinance of God. The people, after the passage of the Red Sea, and their entrance into the wilderness, murmured for want of bread : "Then said the Lord unto Moses, I will rain bread from heaven for you ; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in ; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." (Exod. xvi. 4, 5.) It is added, "On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man : and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath

unto the Lord." "And Moses said, Eat that to-day ; for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord : to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it ; but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws ? See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days ; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day." (Verses 22-30.)

Here, then, we find the weekly Sabbath declared to have been given by God, and practically observed by the people, before the law was announced in the form of ten distinct commands from the summit of Sinai. No manna fell on that day ; but on the preceding day a double quantity fell so as to render the violation of the Sabbath unnecessary ; and the people generally, when they had ascertained this fact, were obedient to the Divine will. That the Sabbath was now for the first time instituted, as Dr. Paley contends, is a mere assumption, contradicted by the circumstances of the case. The people who went to gather manna on the Sabbath are charged with a breach of the law of God. "The Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep MY COMMANDMENTS and MY LAWS ? " But no existing law of the Sabbath do we find to have been then given, except that which is recorded as having been uttered by God when the work of creation was finished, when He blessed and hallowed the seventh day. Moses speaks of the Sabbath as an ordinance

with which the people were familiar, and not as an institution which was then for the first time made known. His words, indeed, clearly imply that the law of the Sabbath and the manna were given at different times. The manna is spoken of as a novelty, and the Sabbath as previously existing. "The Sabbath is spoken of in the preter or past tense, HATH GIVEN, as having been given before that time; whereas the giving of the manna is spoken of in the present tense, HE GIVETH. Is not this a demonstrative refutation of the assertions,...that the Sabbath and the manna were given together?"\* "The entire phraseology in the account of this remarkable transaction accords with the supposition, and with it alone, that the Sabbath had been long established, and was well known to the Israelites."†

4. The manner in which observance of the Sabbath is enjoined in the fourth commandment supplies further proof of the fact for which we are contending.

\* Stopford's "Scripture Account of the Sabbath," p. 66. Edition of 1837.

† Holden's "Christian Sabbath," p. 45. Edition of 1825. "There is nothing either in the text or context, (Exod. xvi. 23,) that seems to intimate that the Sabbath was now *first* given to the Israelites, as some have supposed: on the contrary, it is here spoken of as being perfectly well known, from its having been generally observed. The commandment, it is true, may be considered as being now *renewed*; because they might have supposed that in their unsettled state in the wilderness they might have been exempted from the observance of it. Thus we find, 1. That when God finished His creation, He instituted the Sabbath; 2. When He brought the people out of Egypt, He insisted on the strict observance of it; 3. When He gave the Law, He made it a *tenth* part of the whole, such importance has this institution in the eyes of the Supreme Being!"—Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary.

“REMEMBER the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.” (Exod. xx. 8.) Remembrance is opposed to forgetfulness, and supposes previous knowledge. Dr. Adam Clarke’s note on these words is just and appropriate. He says, “As this is the most ancient institution, God calls them to *remember* it; as if He had said, Do not *forget* that when I had finished My creation, I instituted the Sabbath; and remember why I did so, and for what purposes.” We naturally ask, Why the fourth command of the Decalogue is the only one that is introduced by the term “Remember?” Is it not equally important that mankind should “remember” every other command? Is it not their duty to “remember” the homage which they owe to God? to abstain from idolatry, and from all profane use of the Divine Name? to obey their parents, to abstain from adultery, theft, false witness, and the desire of each other’s property? Why, then, is no other command but the fourth introduced in this manner? The only satisfactory reason that has ever been assigned for the difference is, that the fourth command had been previously promulgated, and was well understood, and the rest of the commands were then for the first time given in the forms which they severally bear.

It has been pertinently observed by a learned author, that “as the seventh-day Sabbath was instituted by God to preserve the memory of the creation, and was given to Adam for this purpose, there can be no doubt but it was religiously kept by him, and that he taught his children and descendants to keep it holy. And as the reason of the institution was always the same, the Sabbath-day probably continued to be observed in all ages before the flood by all the righteous worshippers

of God ; and also after the flood by Noah and his family, and their descendants, from whom it was received by Abraham, and transmitted from him to the Israelites ; and it is evident that it was observed by the Jews before the delivery of the law, and was well known and probably kept by them in Egypt. (Exod. xvi. 5, 22-30.) The institution of the Sabbath being carried by all the descendants of Noah into all countries whither they were dispersed laid the foundation everywhere of reckoning by weeks, or a period of seven days, and also of esteeming the seventh to be a sacred day. But after idolatry prevailed, and dead men were worshipped instead of the true God, the Sabbath-day was laid aside, and by degrees the reason of its institution was lost, and the days of the week were consecrated to the planets, and celestial beings supposed to inhabit them." \*

The peculiarities of the patriarchal Sabbath, as they are expressed in the Mosaic account of its institution, may be thus briefly summed up :—

1. It was a memorial of the creation. Every seventh day the people were afresh reminded of the existence, the unity, the power, the wisdom, the goodness, the universal dominion of God, the Great First Cause of all things ; that they might reverence His authority, fear His wrath, seek His favour, and live in obedience to His will. Had this most wise and holy ordinance been duly observed, the sin of idolatry would never have been known ; for mankind would have been practically mindful of the unity and supreme dominion of God.

\* Jackson's "Chronological Antiquities," vol. i., p. 21. Edition of 1752.



2. It was a day of rest. The ordinary labours of life were then to be suspended, and weary man, doomed to hard toil for his daily bread, was to enjoy an interval of ease and relaxation. What a demonstration of God's mercy ! Though the earth, after the fall, was cursed, and its wholesome productions were to be obtained with difficulty, and often with bitter disappointment, yet it was determined that six days of labour should suffice for this purpose. On the Sabbath, therefore, the compassionate Father of His human offspring called them to dismiss from their anxious minds the exhausting cares of life, to wipe the sweat from their faces, and renew their wasted strength both of mind and body by a day of complete rest and quiet.

3. It was a day of sanctified rest. It was not to be spent in indolence, sloth, and thoughtlessness ; but in devout meditation, in public and private prayer, in thanksgiving, and in benevolent and pious attempts to glorify God by bringing other persons under the influence of His fear and love.

4. It was a day which the Lord blessed. When used according to His will, it was a blessing both to the body and the soul of man. It was a time of physical and mental refreshment, and of undistracted intercourse with God : a day in which men renewed their strength, so as to be prepared for the duties and trials of life, and for the everlasting rest of heaven. It was given as a blessing to individuals, to families, and to communities ; a blessing with respect to time and eternity.

To what extent mankind availed themselves of this most merciful gift of God, from the time of the creation till the giving of the law, we are not informed. It is,

however, undeniable that in those ages there were places sacred to devotion, and men who sustained the priestly office, and discharged its duties ; and hence we conclude that there were also holy times, when the people assembled together to present their offerings to the Lord. That there was a place where the family of Adam were accustomed to offer sacrifice, and perform other acts of religious worship, and where God their Saviour was wont to manifest Himself, seems clear from the lamentation of Cain, on the occasion of his banishment, when he said, "From Thy face shall I be hid." It is added, "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord." (Gen. iv. 14, 16.) The pious members of Seth's family, before the flood, who bore the honourable title of "the sons of God," and who "called upon the name of the Lord," in the midst of abounding profligacy, doubtless had their places and times of religious assembling. (Gen. iv. 26.) Abraham "planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God." (Gen. xxi. 33.) Jacob built an altar for sacrifice, and called the place Beth-el, or the house of God. (Gen. xxviii. 18-22 ; xxxv. 1, 6, 7.) Among the descendants of Noah we find also examples of Gentile piety, and priests who did not belong to the Hebrew race. Abimelech, the King of Gerar, who was contemporary with Abraham, and reproved that patriarch for his duplicity, is placed before us as an upright and conscientious man, who feared God, and eschewed evil. To the "integrity of his heart" God Himself bore witness. (Gen. xx. 5, 6, 9, 10.) Melchizedek was a priest of the Most High God, greater than Abraham, and an eminent type of Christ. (Gen. xiv. 18-20 ; Heb. vii. 1-10.) Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, was

priest of Midian, and a worshipper of the true God. (Exod. ii. 16 ; xviii. 1-12.) That these Gentile priests, who were no idolaters, but worshippers of the God of heaven, were the representatives of large bodies of people, we have every reason to believe : and there can be little doubt that their times of public worship were not of their own selection and appointment ; but that while these distinguished men and their fellow-worshippers sought the favour of God in the use of sacrificial rites, they honoured the Sabbath, which He had sanctified and blessed, by public assemblies on that holy day.

## II.—THE JEWISH SABBATH.

WE come now to investigate the law of the Sabbath as it was given to the Jewish people, and was binding upon them under the dispensation of religion which was introduced in the time of Moses, and ended when the work of redemption was completed, and the Gospel of Christ was fully revealed by the ministry and writings of the Apostles; a period of about fifteen hundred years. During these ages the Sabbath was perpetuated by the Divine command, but certain appendages were connected with it, which concerned the Jewish people only, and were intended to cease, with other peculiarities of their law, when the fulness of time was come. The entire subject will perhaps be best expounded in a series of propositions, which we will proceed at once to specify and illustrate.

I. Our first proposition is, that the law of the Sabbath, as it was given to the Hebrew tribes upon Mount Sinai, was in full agreement with the original institution. It is thus expressed: "Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor

thy stranger that is within thy gates : FOR in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : WHEREFORE the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it." (Exod. xx. 8-11.) This law is repeated, in the same full and comprehensive terms, but with some little variety of expression, in Deut. v. 12-15. In the writings of Moses, as well as in many of the other books of the Old Testament, it is often referred to, and obedience to it is urged upon the people in a manner the most strenuous and earnest. The identity of this law with that which was given at the time of the creation is obvious and undeniable.

1. It enjoins the observance of the Sabbath as a weekly memorial of the creation. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it." The Hebrew tribes, now constituted the people of God, and appointed the depositaries of His truth, were never to lose sight of these great principles of religion, but turn their special attention to them every seventh day,—that God is ONE ; and that, being the CREATOR of all things, He is the SOVEREIGN LORD of all. No other gods were they to have besides Him. The Sabbath was to them an antidote to all polytheism and idolatry.

2. It enjoins the Sabbath as a day of rest. On that day all merely worldly business was to be laid aside, so that the rest might be entire and universal. No head of a family was to engage in any ordinary business of life ; and he was to see that no one who was under his authority ever violated the sanctity of that day. Children and servants were to be exempt from all kinds



of labour; the heathen stranger, dwelling in the Holy Land, was to share in the benefit; *his* attention being also directed to the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, whom every human being is therefore bound to honour and serve, to the exclusion of all false deities. Even the ox and the ass, with every other animal employed in husbandry or in travelling, were on that day to rest from their toils. Where the law was duly observed, what a calm and impressive scene must the Sabbath have presented! Not a sound was heard; the busy world was hushed to rest; that all might listen with undistracted attention to the voice from heaven which says, in mercy and in power, "Be still, and know that I am God!"

3. It required that the Sabbath should be sanctified to God. To spend the day merely in abstinence from labour was to do nothing more than was done by the ox or the ass. The day was to be consecrated to God. The manner in which this duty was to be discharged is not specified in the Decalogue, but was left, as it was in the patriarchal times, to the consciences of individuals. In the Levitical law, which was subsequently given, it was provided that special sacrifices should be offered on that holy day. "This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the Lord; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt-offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even." "And on the Sabbath-day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof: this is the burnt-offering of every Sabbath, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-

offering." (Num. xxviii. 3, 4, 9, 10.) While the people, therefore, rested on the Sabbath from their daily toil, a double duty devolved upon the priests. Hence our Lord's reproof, addressed to the erring and censorious Pharisees, who condemned the hungry disciples for plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath-day, as they passed through the fields: "Have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath-days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?" (Matt. xii. 5.)

We learn from various passages of the New Testament, that the Jews were accustomed, in obedience to this command, to assemble in their synagogues on the Sabbath-day, for the purpose of hearing the Holy Scriptures read and expounded, and of listening to words of exhortation on religious and moral subjects, as well as to unite in prayer to God. In these appropriate services our blessed Saviour was accustomed to join from early life. At "Nazareth, where He had been brought up," "as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day." (Luke iv. 16.) In the apostolic council at Jerusalem the fact was recognised, that "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day." (Acts xv. 21.)

4. The Sabbath was given to the Jewish nation as a blessing from God. It was to be regarded not merely as an expression of His authority over them, but of His grace and mercy. "The Lord blessed the Sabbath-day;" so that the observance of it was both a duty and a benefit. On that holy day, especially, they were brought into direct intercourse with God, and were thus prepared by His grace for the fulfilment of every

other obligation; and while they lived in obedience to His will, they dwelt in security and peace, protected from every enemy, enjoying the fruits of the earth in rich abundance, according to the Divine promise. In the prospect of their national happiness and prosperity, consequent upon their obedience, Moses exclaimed just before his departure, "The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!" (Deut. xxxiii. 28, 29.)

At the same time their obedience was connected with richer blessings than the gifts of Providence. Waiting upon the Lord, in the devout use of His ordinances, they so renewed their strength, as to mount up towards heaven as on eagles' wings, to run their race of duty without weariness, and to walk in the way of holiness without spiritual faintness. (Isai. xl. 31.) When they approached His mercy-seat, they received the impress of His name. He manifested Himself to them as "the Lord, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.) Nor was He unmindful of His promise to circumcise their hearts, so that they should love Him with all their heart and soul. (Deut. xxx. 6.) The Book of Psalms is an instructive record of the religious experience of the spiritually-minded Israelites, who entered into the purposes of God in the various ordinances which He had instituted among them, and especially of the weekly Sabbath, the most sacred of all. They saw His goings in His sanctuary; they beheld His beauty in His temple; they tasted that He is gracious; He anointed them with the

oil of gladness, caused their cup of joy to run over; and they drank of the river of His pleasure.

5. The command of God, which enjoined upon the people of Israel the observance of the weekly Sabbath, was placed by Him among the precepts of the moral law; a fact which deserves special attention, but has often been overlooked by men who have written on this subject. The ceremonial and political laws, which concerned the Jews only, and were intended to pass away when their theocracy and peculiar forms of worship should be superseded by the Gospel, were imparted by God to Moses, and by him written in a book, as a permanent record, which they were to preserve, and read through their several generations. But the Ten Commandments, embodying the principles and details of the moral law, which is universally binding upon mankind, were given in a very different manner. Addressing his people respecting the Ten Commandments, Moses said, "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: AND HE ADDED NO MORE. And He wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me." (Deut. v. 22.) These tables were deposited in the ark, and were covered by the mercy-seat, upon which the Divine glory rested, in "the holiest of all." (Heb. ix. 3-5.) No such distinction was conferred upon any other laws that God has ever given to men. The charge to sanctify the weekly Sabbath, in memory of the creation, constitutes one of the Ten Commandments, thus honoured by the great Lawgiver. It concerns, therefore, not the Jews only, but all nations. "Strangers," not of the Hebrew race, dwelling in the

Holy Land, were required to obey this law as well as the Jews. It was not intended, therefore, to pass away with the Levitical forms of worship, and the political regulations of the Jewish theocracy, but to bind the consciences of men through all time; for it forms an integral part of the universal law which forbids idolatry, theft, adultery, and murder. The hand of God, which wrote, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me," "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," "Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbour's," inscribed also the command, "Remember the Sabbath-day, that thou keep it holy."

Thus far, then, there is nothing peculiar in the law of the Sabbath as it was given to the Jewish people. It was simply a repetition of the original law, which was given to Adam in the garden of Eden, and to all his posterity in him.

II. We advance, as a second general proposition, that while the Sabbath was given to the Jews as a memorial of the creation, and as a means of great spiritual benefit, the strict observance of it was enforced by the remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt. Accordingly we find, in the repetition of the law, at the close of Moses's life, he said to the people, "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: THEREFORE the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day." (Deut. v. 15.)

The deliverance of the tribes of Israel out of Egypt is one of the most signal interpositions of Divine Provi-



dence the world has ever witnessed. It is a demonstration of the power, the faithfulness, the justice, and the goodness of God;—of His *power*, in controlling the elements of nature, turning water into blood, multiplying and destroying animals, dividing the sea, and causing its waters to stand like the solid rock;—of His *faithfulness*, in the fulfilment of promises, which had been given several ages before;—of His *justice*, in the infliction of condign punishment upon a nation which had not only apostatized from God, and abandoned itself to the most degrading idolatry, but had violated every principle of right and humanity in its treatment of the Hebrew people, and had set the Almighty Himself at open defiance;—and of His *goodness*, in saving His people from a state of cruel oppression, and in bestowing upon them blessings rich and innumerable. The great purpose of their emancipation was, that they might be God's "witnesses" through ages of heathen darkness and degeneracy.

In pressing upon his people, thus wonderfully blessed, the duty of obedience to the laws of God, Moses often reminds them of their deliverance out of Egypt; and deduces from that stupendous event motives to an entire compliance with their Maker's will. "Thou shalt remember," says he, "that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: THEREFORE I command thee this thing to-day." (Deut. xv. 15.) "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes." (Deut. xvi. 12.) "But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee thence: THEREFORE I command thee to do this thing." (Deut.

xxiv. 18.) "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: THEREFORE I command thee to do this thing." (Deut. xxiv. 22.)

From these texts it is evident that the Sabbath was not given to the Jewish people as a memorial of their deliverance out of the bondage of Egypt, as some writers have contended, regarding it as an institution which concerned them only; but that deliverance is referred to as supplying a motive to obedience. The Sabbath was given to them as a memorial of the creation, just as it was given to the rest of mankind at the beginning; but the Jews, having been so wonderfully delivered and blessed by God, were laid under special obligations to observe this ordinance, as well as every other that He had given them. If mankind in general, during the patriarchal ages, were bound to observe and sanctify the Sabbath, much more were the tribes of Israel, whom God had so signally delivered from the iron furnace of slavery, and taken into covenant with Himself, bound to observe and sanctify it. From being few in number, and the most abject of all people, they were made a powerful nation, and honoured with such tokens of God's favour as were never conferred upon any other section of the human family. The Sabbath was not given to them to remind them of their deliverance, but they were put in mind of their deliverance, that, in return for so great a benefit, they might obey the law of the Sabbath, and every other command that God had given them.

III. Our third proposition is, that the Jews were required to keep the Sabbath with great strictness, and that among them the presumptuous violation of it was punished with death.

1. They were to abstain from all worldly business;

such as the cultivation of the soil, buying and selling, and every employment which had for its object the acquisition of wealth. "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death." (Exod. xxxi. 15.) "Thus saith the Lord; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath-day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath-day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers." (Jer. xvii. 21, 22.) These commands Nehemiah exerted himself with great fidelity and zeal to carry into practical effect. (Nehem. xiii. 15-22.) But worldly-minded men, as might be expected, bent upon earthly gain, fretted under the restraint which was thus imposed upon them; "saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" This was the language of ungodly and immoral men, who not only disliked the worship of God, but practised fraud in the transaction of business; "making the ephah small,...and falsifying the balances by deceit." (Amos viii. 5.) A want of moral honesty has been often found in connexion with Sabbath-desecration. Men who are unjust to God, withholding from Him the glory due to His name, can hardly be expected to respect the rights of their fellow-men.

2. The cattle were to rest on the Sabbath, as well as the people. Brute creatures belong to God, who, at the time of the creation, subjected them to the service of men; but that service has its limits, which ought not to be exceeded. He gave to the cattle that

were employed in labour the rest of the Sabbath ; and of that rest they were in no case to be deprived by their Hebrew owners, except in cases of necessity.

3. Journeys of business and of amusement were also forbidden on the Sabbath-day. "Abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." (Exod. xvi. 29.) This was spoken with respect to the manna, a double quantity of which fell on the sixth day ; so that the people might not go out to gather it on the Sabbath. Yet the precept was understood to be of perpetual obligation, requiring the people to abstain from travelling on the Sabbath for worldly purposes, and for mere gratification, instead of devoting the whole to God. Yet the precept was not intended to confine the people to their houses when the glory of God and the purposes of humanity called them abroad. The Jews determined for themselves the limits of "a Sabbath-day's journey;" (Acts i. 12 ;) deeming it unlawful on that day to travel more than about a mile ; but this was their law, not the law of God. The priests compassed the city of Jericho seven days in succession under the command of Joshua ; and, of course, one of those days was the Sabbath. (Josh. vi. 13-16.) Our Saviour was "made under the law," (Gal. iv. 4,) and has therefore given a true exposition of it in His conduct, as well as in His teaching ; and we find Him, in the course of His ministry, travelling "through the cornfields on the Sabbath-day," accompanied by "His disciples." (Mark ii. 23.) The Jews were also accustomed on the Sabbath-day to attend their respective synagogues, for the purpose of hearing the Scriptures read and expounded, and of uniting in the worship of God. (Acts xv. 21.) Nor

did any of them hesitate on the Sabbath-day to "loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering," or to pull them out of a pit into which they might have casually fallen. (Luke xiii. 15; xiv. 5.) The law, therefore, which required every man to "abide in his place on the Sabbath" was understood to forbid the gathering of the manna on that day, and of course every other worldly employment, but not to restrain men from acts of humanity, and much less from going abroad for purposes strictly religious.

4. The Jews were forbidden to kindle a fire in their houses on the Sabbath-day. (Exod. xxxv. 3.) This precept, we apprehend, is not to be understood as requiring them at all seasons of the year to abstain from the comfort and convenience of a fire in their dwellings; for this might be a serious injury, especially to infants, to aged people, and to persons in a state of sickness, or of delicate health; and He who prefers mercy to sacrifice certainly prefers human life to the *mere rest* of the Sabbath. If the Son of God healed the sick on the Sabbath-day, it cannot have been the design of the great Lawgiver to require of His people such an observance of that day as would be fatal to health, and even to life itself. For there were times even in the Holy Land when others besides the Psalmist had occasion to say, "He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold?" (Psalm cxlvii. 16, 17.) At the time of our Lord's trial "the servants and officers...made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself." (John xviii. 18.) The Jewish Sabbath commenced in



the evening ; and it could be no hardship to the people, at the cold seasons of the year, to kindle their fires before the going down of the sun, and to lay on them such a quantity of fuel as would keep them burning till the close of the next day.\*

5. An opinion has been somewhat extensively prevalent, that the law of Moses absolutely forbade the people to prepare any part of their food on the Sabbath ; so that unless it was prepared beforehand, they must fast on that day : but the correctness of this opinion is not very apparent. If the Israelites in the wilderness were at liberty to roast or boil the manna for their daily eating, and on the Sabbath to do neither, but to eat it as it fell from heaven, as the Mosaic narrative is generally understood ; (Exod. xvi. 23 ;) it does not follow that they were never to roast, or seethe, or otherwise dress, any article of diet, on that sacred day, after their settlement in the land of Canaan. Here again we may properly refer to our Saviour's practice and teaching, which we may justly regard as the true exposition of the law ; for Him we are commanded to "hear" with implicit faith. He was "made under the law," and "fulfilled all righteousness." He "went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath-day ;" and it is clear from the sacred text, that He was one among many guests. (Luke xiv. 1-15.) It is hard to conceive that the whole of the food for so great a company was prepared beforehand. Besides, in cases of sickness, of aged people, and of young children, it would appear that certain articles of diet must occasionally at least be prepared on the Sab-

\* See note D, at the end of the volume.

bath, if life and health were to be held sacred. If the ox and the ass were to be helped out of a pit on the Sabbath-day, that they might not perish, and to be led out to watering, that they might not be subjected to unnecessary suffering or to injury; surely human life and health ought not to be endangered by the want of such relief as can only be supplied by the culinary art. At the same time luxurious feasting on the Sabbath-day, such as requires laborious effort on the part of servants, and especially the preparation of delicacies, for the mere gratification of the appetite, are certainly forbidden by the law of the Sabbath, both to Jew and Gentile.

6. The threatening of death, as the penalty of violating the Sabbath, is repeated with solemn emphasis in the Mosaic writings. "Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death." "Whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death." (Exod. xxxi. 14, 15.) The manner in which this punishment was inflicted we learn from Num. xv. 32-36. "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath-day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses." Sins of ignorance might be atoned for by sacrifice, and then forgiven; but it was declared, "the soul that doeth ought pre-

sumptuously," (or "with a high mind," as the marginal rendering is,) "whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and.....that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him." (Num. xv. 27-31.) Such appears to have been the case of this unhappy man. The law of the Sabbath was promulgated, and therefore well known; and it would appear that he went forth, and violated it in an open and daring manner, regardless of the authority by which it was given and enforced.

In his attempt to prove that the Sabbath was merely a Jewish Institution, and that the law which enjoins the observance of it is not binding upon Christians, Dr. Paley has said, "If the command by which the Sabbath was instituted be binding upon Christians, it must be binding as to the day, the duties, and the penalty; in none of which it is received."\* The answer is, that "the command by which the Sabbath was *instituted*" was given at the creation, and was repeated in the Decalogue; but neither with the original "command," nor with the repetition of it in the Decalogue, is there any mention of death, as a penalty to be inflicted by the civil magistrate, in case of disobedience. That penalty was afterwards introduced, as a peculiarity of the Jewish economy, as it was in respect of other forms of moral delinquency. The original law of the Sabbath may be acknowledged as universally "binding" upon mankind, and yet the just punishment which the violation of it merits may be varied, or left to God, who will not fail to summon every one to judgment, and deal with all offenders according to their deeds. The law of the Sabbath is coeval with human nature;

\* "Moral and Political Philosophy," vol. ii., p. 79. Edition of 1818.

the penalty of temporal death, as the consequence of its violation, concerned the Jews only. It began with their economy, and ended with it: but "the command by which the Sabbath was instituted" remains in undiminished force.

It is surprising that a man of Dr. Paley's sagacity did not see the fallacy of his statement respecting the Sabbath, and the penalty of death by which the observance of it was enforced. The principle which he assumes would, if practically adopted, supersede nearly the whole of the moral law of God. For it is a fact that several other precepts of the Decalogue, as they were addressed to the Jews, were enforced by the same penalty. Are we then to conclude, that because this penalty is not now inflicted, those precepts of the Decalogue are not "binding" upon the consciences of Christian people? It will not be denied that the law which forbids idolatry, and enjoins the worship of God, and of Him only, is universally "binding" upon mankind; for it is the very first of the Ten Commandments: yet, according to the law of Moses, every Israelite that should attempt to persuade others to violate this law was to be put to death without mercy. "Thou shalt surely kill him." "Thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die." (Deut. xiii. 6-11.)

The law which forbids blasphemy, and directs that men shall reverence the name of God, is unquestionably of universal obligation, not limited to either time or place; yet the violation of this law among the Jews was also punished with death. "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him." (Levit. xxiv. 16.)

The command which enjoins upon married people the duty of mutual fidelity, is "binding" upon mankind universally, and throughout all time; yet, among the Jews, adultery was punished with death. "The adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." (Levit. xx. 10.)

The law which directs children to honour their parents, no one will deny to be of universal obligation; yet, according to the Mosaic code, the incorrigible violator of this law was doomed to die as a warning to others. "All the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear." (Deut. xxi. 21.)

Dr. Paley tells us that if we accept the law of the Sabbath, as it is contained in the Decalogue, as "binding upon Christians," we must take it with its Jewish penalty, and put to death every Sabbath-breaker. We assent to his premises, but deny his conclusion; and remind all who receive his teaching, that upon the same principle we must give a general licence to mankind to worship idols, to take the name of God in vain, to commit adultery, and to despise parental authority, or punish all these sins with death, because they were thus punished under the Jewish economy. Surely a principle which would set aside the greater part of the moral law cannot be founded on truth!

The fact is, that the government under which the Jews as a nation were placed was a theocracy. All their laws were given them by God, and He was their sole Head and King. Not one of their institutions was the result of their own skill and contrivance. All was of God's appointment, and everything that con-



cerned them was to be left to His decision. He dwelt in the midst of them, and to His oracle they had free access in every case of doubt. Under this constitution it pleased Him to enforce religious and moral obedience by temporal rewards and punishments. Submission to His authority was followed by temporal as well as spiritual blessings; and irreligion and moral guilt were punished by temporal calamities, which were sometimes inflicted by the hand of God Himself, and at other times by the hand of the civil power, as He directed.

The moral law forbade idolatry, blasphemy, adultery, and disobedience to parents, from the time of the creation, and will forbid them to the end of the world; and all who live and die in the practice of these evils will for ever feel the weight of God's displeasure. Under the Jewish theocracy these sins were punished with death: but they were not thus punished till that theocracy was established; and they ceased to be thus punished when that theocracy was at an end. All this is equally true of the Sabbath. The law of the Sabbath was in force from the time of the creation. Under the Jewish theocracy the violation of this law, as in the case of idolatry, blasphemy, adultery, and disobedience to parents, was punished with death. When that theocracy ceased, and God cast off His ancient people, this particular penalty ceased with it; but the law of the Sabbath has never been repealed, and never will be, any more than the law that forbids the other sins which have just been specified. The argument of Dr. Paley against the perpetuity of the Sabbath, if argument we may call it, would, we repeat, set aside the greater part of the moral law contained in the Decalogue, and give mankind a licence to live in sin without restraint; for it

would lead to this conclusion, that the precepts of the Decalogue generally, having been enforced by the penalty of death, are peculiarities of the Jewish economy, and not "binding upon Christians."

IV. We advance, as a fourth general proposition, that the weekly Sabbath, as it was given to the Jews, was connected with various other Sabbaths, or seasons of sacred rest.

1. The first that we will mention took place in connexion with the feast of the Passover. This festival was instituted in memory of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, and especially of the mercy that was shown to them when they enjoyed entire security while the destroying angel went through the land at midnight, and in one sad hour slew all the first-born, both of man and beast. It was celebrated annually on the fourteenth day of the first month of their ecclesiastical year; beginning at noon on that day, and continuing seven days. The various ceremonies connected with it are described, Exodus xii. The first and the last days of this festival were days of rest. "In the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you." (Exod. xii. 16.)

2. A second feast in connexion with which the people were required to rest was the Pentecost, which was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the Passover, and was intended to commemorate the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai, which took place just fifty days after the departure of the tribes out of Egypt. They computed seven weeks from the Passover to the Pentecost,

beginning with the day after the Passover. For this reason the Jews called it the feast of weeks; but the Christians gave it the name of Pentecost, which signifies the fiftieth day. As this festival was held at the close of the harvest, the goodness of God in giving the fruits of the earth was also gratefully acknowledged by the people. Respecting this sacred season it was said, "Ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations." (Lev. xxiii. 21.)

3. A third rest took place in connexion with the feast of Tabernacles; which was instituted in memory of the residence of the people in tents during the forty years of their sojourn in the wilderness. It was kept in Jerusalem, and lasted eight days, during which the people dwelt in booths, erected for the purpose. "The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein." "On the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you:.....it shall be a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein." (Lev. xxiii. 34-36.)

4. A fourth annual rest was the great day of Atonement; the very significant ceremonial of which is described Lev. xvi. It is said: "On the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for

you before the Lord your God." "Ye shall do no manner of work." "It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest." "From even unto even shall ye celebrate your Sabbath." (Lev. xxiii. 27-32.)

5. A fifth annual rest was the feast of Trumpets, which took place at the beginning of the civil year, and appears to have been designed to celebrate that event. "In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein : but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord." (Lev. xxiii. 24, 25.) A further account of the religious services of this day is given in Numbers xxix. 1-6.

In addition to the weekly Sabbath, and to the annual Sabbaths which we have just mentioned, the Jews had other sacred seasons, of much longer continuance, to which the name of Sabbath was applied. Such, for instance, was the seventh year, in which their land kept what was called "a Sabbath unto the Lord." The law concerning this year is expressed Lev. xxv. 3-5 : "Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof ; but in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord : thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed : for it is a year of rest unto the land."

This law, we may easily imagine, would test the faith of the people, who would naturally expect a famine as the consequence of thus permitting their land to remain uncultivated for twelve months, so as to lose an entire

harvest. An extraordinary supply of food was therefore promised in the sixth year, so as to render labour during the year ensuing altogether unnecessary.

Similar to this seventh year of rest was the Jubilee, which returned every fiftieth year. At this period alienated land was restored to the families to whom it was originally assigned, and insolvent debtors who had sold their liberty were all emancipated; so that the Jubilee was a time of general gladness and rejoicing, and was ushered in by the sound of trumpets, which were blown in the length and breadth of the Holy Land. "Thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you." (Lev. xxv. 8-12.)

The numerous seasons of sacred rest which Almighty God assigned to the Hebrew nation must have been a great and acceptable relief to the labouring poor; and as the people were so frequently called together, to appear in "holy convocations before the Lord," when they entered into the design of their institutions, there



must have been among all classes of the community a spirit of kindly brotherhood, and a deep feeling that the mercy of God to them was eminently tender and condescending. They dwelt in a land of plenty, which to them was also a land of rest. Its productions were rich and abundant, and the people had many days of complete respite from labour; so that their condition formed a perfect contrast to that of their fathers, who groaned under the tyranny of their hard taskmasters in Egypt.

V. We advance, as a fifth general proposition, that, among other objects, the Sabbath was a sign between God and the Jewish nation. "Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a SIGN between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." (Exod. xxxi. 13.) "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a SIGN between Me and the children of Israel for ever." (Exod. xxxi. 16, 17.) "Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a SIGN between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." "I am the Lord your God; walk in My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; and hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a SIGN between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." (Ezek. xx. 12, 19, 20.) Upon these texts we offer two observations.

1. The weekly Sabbath was a sign to the Jewish nation that God had separated them from all other nations, and had appointed them to be His "witnesses," and the depositaries of His truth. The rest of mankind had generally apostatized from Him; they had aban-

doned His worship, and substituted for it the worship of idols ; they had given up the Sabbath as a memorial of the creation, and no longer acknowledged Him as the Sovereign of His own universe. In this state of things the Sabbath was a sign that distinguished the people of Israel from the heathen : for, while the rest of mankind had forgotten or neglected this Divine ordinance, *they* observed and sanctified it as a memorial of the creation, thus honouring God as the Maker and Lord of all. They were not so much distinguished from other nations by the rite of circumcision as by the Sabbath ; for, while circumcision was practised by the Idumeans, the Ishmaelites, and the Egyptians, the Jews alone observed the Sabbath-day.\* This was the peculiar badge of the Hebrew family. They honoured Him by a weekly acknowledgment of Him as the Creator of all worlds ; and He honoured them by special tokens of His presence and favour ; so that they might well say, “ What people is there to whom God is so nigh as He is unto us ? ”

2. The various other Sabbaths which had been given to the nation, and which were peculiar to them, were also a sign that God had sanctified them, and constituted them His peculiar people. “Hallow My Sabbaths ; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.” (Ezek. xx. 20.) The annual Sabbaths, and the seven-years’ Sabbaths, which God had given to the Jews, were always attended by miracles ; and these were tangible demonstrations of His presence and agency. Three times every year the men of Israel were required to leave their homes in the country, and repair to Jerusa-

\* Holden on the Sabbath, pp. 54, 55. Edition of 1825.

lem, for the purpose of Divine worship, and to observe the rests which God had appointed. On all these occasions the extremities of the land were left without any visible protection ; and it might naturally be expected that families would be murdered, and corn and cattle seized and carried off, by marauding parties. But even this danger was provided for by God, who said to His people, " Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year." (Exod. xxxiv. 24.) The observance of these Sabbaths, therefore, was a striking sign of the people's subjection to God's will, of their reliance upon His faithfulness and power ; and the preservation of their families and property was no less a sign of His care for them, as a people whom He had placed in a near and special relation to Himself. They honoured Him by leaving their homes in obedience to His command ; and He honoured their submission and trust by placing the covetous desires of the neighbouring heathen under effectual restraint, so that no alien crossed the Israelitish border, or laid his hand upon Israelitish property, while the people hallowed His Sabbaths, and were otherwise obedient to His will. It was when they withdrew their allegiance, that they forfeited His protection.

These observations apply with equal truth to the seven-years' Sabbaths, and to the Sabbath of the Jubilee. The land was to remain uncultivated for twelve months ; yet the people knew no want, for the crops in the preceding year were three times as large as they were in ordinary cases. These events were strictly miraculous, and therefore a sure sign that the Lord was the God of the people in whose behalf they were wrought.

But while the Jewish Sabbaths *in general* were “a sign” to the people of Israel, it does not follow, as some writers have strangely argued, that God never gave the *weekly* Sabbath either to the people who lived in the patriarchal times, or to the Christian church.

VI. We advance, as a sixth and final proposition, that the weekly Sabbath, as it was given to the Jews, had an especial reference to the maintenance and advancement of spiritual religion. Two passages of Holy Scripture will be sufficient to place this subject before us in its just light. “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day ; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable ; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words : then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord ; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” (Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.) Here the cultivation of a devout and spiritual frame of mind on the Sabbath-day is earnestly recommended by the prophet to the Hebrew people of his day, as a requirement of God ; and they are assured that the communication to them of blessings rich and abundant would be the direct consequence of their compliance with the Divine will. The sanctification of the Sabbath is always attended by a large amount of spiritual good, and often by providential mercies which would otherwise be withheld.

But the duties and benefits of the Sabbath, even under the Mosaic dispensation, were not confined to the Hebrew race. The same prophet says, in another place, speaking in the name of the Lord, “Also the

sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar; for Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." (Isaiah lvi. 6, 7.) Hence it appears that the Sabbath, with its appropriate duties and blessings, was designed for the Heathen, as well as for the Jew. The house of God, especially on the Sabbath-day, was a house of prayer for people of every land and tribe; and He, the Lord of the temple, was there, to meet the devout worshipper, from whatever region he might come; for even then He said, "All souls are Mine." Here men of every nation might have free access to Him, so as to receive the forgiveness of their sins, and that sanctification of their nature, without which they could never attain to a state of endless blessedness. The weeping publican, who sought and found mercy there, may be justly regarded as an example of thousands more belonging to the Jewish race, who were also made joyful in God's house of prayer; and the noble Ethiopian, whom Philip instructed and baptized in the open air, was in all probability a type of many Gentiles, who undertook long journeys that they might render homage to the God of heaven in His own temple. This convert to Christianity was by birth a "stranger;" but he "had come to Jerusalem for to worship." (Acts viii. 27.) He may have "come" pensive and sad, "weary and heavy laden;" but he went home "rejoicing." He came to



worship God in Jerusalem, the city of the Great King; and though he did not find Him there, the old temple-service being then abolished, yet his journey was not in vain. He came to seek the Lord, and the Lord was found of him, though not in the ancient manner. The temple was God's house no more; the Levitical offerings had lost their efficacy; the Jewish priesthood was superseded; the world's great Sacrifice had been offered and accepted; mankind of every tribe and nation had now in every place the freest access to God through the mediation of His Son; and the noble stranger obtained the blessing that he sought, not in the temple, but in the "desert." His intention, however, was right, and the true purpose of his visit was gained.

## III.—THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

WE have investigated the nature and claims of the weekly Sabbath, as it was instituted at the creation, and binding upon mankind in the patriarchal ages ; and as it was renewed in the time of Moses, and enjoyed by the Jews under their peculiar dispensation : we come next to speak of this sacred ordinance as it is given to Christians, and is to be observed by them to the end of the world. In our attempt to give just views of this subject, I know not that I can adopt a better method than that of laying down what I conceive to be the teaching of Holy Scripture, in a series of propositions, which I will endeavour to illustrate and prove with as much brevity and plainness as will consist with a due apprehension of the several questions which require discussion.

I. Our first proposition is, that the Sabbath, as a Divinely-appointed Institution, did not end with the Jewish dispensation.

On this point we are at issue with a class of writers to whom we have before adverted : I mean such men as Heylin, White, Brerewood, Pocklington, and others, of a former age, and Dr. Paley and Archbishop Whately of modern times ; whose theory is, that the Sabbath was nothing more than a Jewish institution,

which commenced at the time of the Exodus, and ended with the whole of the Levitical economy, when the Jews as a nation were dispersed, their temple was demolished, and the Gospel revelation completed. Since then, they acknowledge that a weekly Sabbath has been observed in the Christian church, but not by the command of God. The Christian Sabbath, they say, is enjoined only by the authority and consent of the church itself, and rests on the same foundation as Good Friday, Holy Thursday, and Christmas-day. They tell us it is right in itself, and matter of duty, to observe the Christian Sabbath, because of the benefits connected with it, and because it is a general duty to obey ecclesiastical regulations; but we are not bound to observe it with anything like Jewish strictness, nor as an ordinance of God. In opposition to these principles we maintain,—

1. That as the Sabbath did not take its origin from the law of Moses, there is no just reason why it should cease with that law. It was, as we have seen, of a much earlier date than any of the Mosaic institutes, being given to Adam in the garden of Eden; and therefore given through him to all mankind, unless it was afterwards repealed. The command to observe the Sabbath was renewed by Moses, who connected with it various adjuncts and regulations, which were addressed to the Jewish people, and to them only; and these were intended to cease with all the other peculiarities of the Mosaic economy; but the Sabbath existed previously to these appendages, and was altogether independent of them.

In this respect the case of marriage is analogous to that of the Sabbath. Marriage was instituted at the

time of the creation; and all who chose to enter into that holy relation were from the beginning bound to submit to the law of God by which it was regulated. But in the Mosaic code there are various regulations respecting marriage which were intended to apply to the Jews only, such as the requirement that the younger brother of a husband who died without issue should marry the widow; and that the firstborn of this second marriage should be regarded as the offspring of the first. The manner in which divorces were to be effected, and the crime of adultery was to be punished, comes under the same category. But when these regulations relative to marriage had passed away, the law of marriage, as it was originally given by God, remained in undiminished force, and will remain till the end of time. Just in the same manner, when all the Jewish appendages to the Sabbath had passed away, and the precepts which enjoined them had become a dead letter, the Sabbath, as it was originally given, remained as a blessed privilege vouchsafed to mankind at the time of their creation, and as a matter of sacred duty to the end of the world.

2. The law of the Sabbath is placed by God among His moral precepts, and is therefore not limited to particular periods of time, or particular classes of people. Moral precepts are binding upon all men, in every age, inasmuch as they are the law of human nature. Every one that possesses the understanding, the affections, and the conscience of a man is bound to love and worship God, to reverence the Divine name, and to abstain from idolatry. He is bound also to honour his father and mother, to respect the reputation, the property, and the life of every other man, to abstain from

adultery, and never to covet that which belongs to his neighbour. The precepts which enjoin this course of action are an expression of the will and nature of God ; so that they can never be repealed. Among these precepts, as we formerly had occasion to observe, God Himself has placed that which enjoins the sanctification of the Sabbath-day. He claims a seventh part of our time to be devoted exclusively to His service. This claim He has asserted, not among the precepts which are variable, which belong to some classes of people only, which are given at one time, and then, having answered their purpose, are repealed at another ; but as a part of the law which is immutable as His throne. The earthly Sabbath will give place only to the everlasting Sabbath of the heavenly state.

The perpetuity of the moral law of God is a prominent subject in the teaching of our Lord and His holy apostles. "Think not," said He, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matt. v. 17, 18.) "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." (Matt. vii. 21.) "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matt. xix. 17.) "Do we then make void the law through faith ? God forbid : yea, we establish the law." (Rom. iii. 31.) "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." (1 Cor. vii. 19.) "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may



enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. xxii. 14.) It is observable that when our blessed Saviour and His apostles thus insist upon obedience to the moral law of God, they never except the fourth commandment, and therefore require obedience to it as well as to every other. It is not a partial but an entire obedience that they demand.

3. The reasons for the original institution are not local and temporary, but universal and perpetual.

It was instituted as a memorial of the creation of all things by the power of God. And is it not as much the duty of Christians in all generations to retain a devout remembrance of God, as the Creator and Lord of all, as it was the duty of Adam in the bowers of Eden, of the Sethites before and after the Flood, of the family of Abraham, in all their wanderings, and of the Hebrew church in the Holy Land?

The Sabbath was given as a season of rest. And human nature stands in as much need of a weekly respite from toil as it ever did since Adam was doomed to obtain his bread by the sweat of his brow. A few years ago Dr. Farre, an eminent physician in London, was required to give evidence concerning the observance of the Sabbath before a Committee of the House of Commons; and he stated, as the result of extensive observation and inquiry, and as an undeniable fact, clearly ascertained, that animal life is so seriously injured by incessant labour as to be prematurely extinguished. Men who are subjected to hard labour, without regular intervals of rest, like that of the weekly Sabbath, scarcely ever attain to advanced years, and never to a healthy old age. He stated also that cattle which are employed in perpetual labour die at an earlier period

than those which are allowed regular periods of rest. It would therefore appear that the Sabbath is wisely and mercifully adapted by God to the degree of physical strength which He has imparted to men and to the animals which He has subjected to their service.

The Sabbath was instituted with an especial reference to the spiritual interests of mankind. They are made for God, whose works they are bound to observe and contemplate ; whose word they are to read and meditate upon ; whose favour and nature they are to seek and obtain ; whose worship they are to celebrate, by prayer, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise. They are to maintain communion with God by attendance upon His ordinances ; and they are to cherish and strengthen their social affections by spiritual and benevolent intercourse with each other. In this manner they are to be prepared for the enjoyment of God in glory, and for an endless and sanctified union with each other in heaven. These objects are not local and temporary. They concern men everywhere, and throughout all time ; and as God gave them the Sabbath with a reference to these high and holy objects, we conclude on the surest grounds that He will never take it from them. The weekly Sabbath leads to that which never ends.

4. The Sabbath is required by the very nature of Christianity. The Gospel is to be preached to the end of the world, in order to the conversion of the ungodly, and the edification of the regenerate. Children are to be admitted into the church by baptism ; and believers are to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, in memory of their Saviour's cross and passion. The weak of the flock are to be strengthened and encouraged ; the negligent are to be admonished and warned ; and

all are directed to comfort and edify one another. But then all these necessary branches of Christian duty require time, and time sacredly set apart for the purpose.

It is said by the men whose theory we are now opposing, that Almighty God made provision for the discharge of religious duties in the Jewish church by the appointment of the weekly Sabbath, but that under the Christian dispensation, in which the responsibilities of men are increased,—for where much is given, much is also required,—He has left them to appoint a Sabbath for themselves. The answer is, that if the Christian Sabbath be a mere ordinance of men, for which there is no Divine warrant in the form of a command from God, then men have a right to abolish it; for what men have made by their own mere will, they may unmake in the same manner; and then what will become of Christian ordinances in general? They may still be performed by men set apart for the service, but no time is left for the people generally to attend them; so that the benefit of them is lost, and the design of the Lord Jesus in the institution of them is defeated. No man who duly considers the subject can suppose that the Divine Author of the Christian religion has made His arrangements so defectively, as to have enjoined various duties upon His church through all ages, without securing the requisite time for the full and orderly performance of them, and His people an opportunity for attending to them with regularity and effect.

Besides, the Sabbath is in every respect a privilege and a blessing. The Holy Scriptures speak of the evangelical dispensation as the richest manifestation of God's mercy that was ever made to mankind. "If

the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." (2 Cor. iii. 9, 10.) "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." (Isaiah xxx. 26.) In opposition to these cheering statements, and to many others of a similar kind which might be easily adduced, writers on the Sabbath belonging to the Paley and Whately school would persuade us that, on the introduction of the last and richest dispensation of truth and grace, the blessed God took from His Church one of the most valuable blessings that He had conferred upon it, and that His people had enjoyed for ages; thus making the ministration of condemnation to exceed in glory the ministration of righteousness; and, with regard to religious opportunities, reducing the light of the sun to the feeble glimmerings of the moon, and the glimmering of the moon to the twinkling of a star: contradicting the very letter of holy writ.

5. Our blessed Lord recognised the existence of the Sabbath after the termination of the Mosaical economy. Before the close of His ministry He predicted the last siege of Jerusalem, the demolition of the temple, the destruction of immense masses of the Jewish people by pestilence, famine, and the Roman sword, and the dispersion of the miserable survivors. He also gave His disciples instruction as to the time and manner of their escape; adding, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath-day." (Matt. xxiv.

20.) The seventh day of the week ceased to be the Sabbath of God when our Saviour rose from the dead. The siege of Jerusalem, from which the Christians were to escape, took place about thirty-nine or forty years after that event : yet even then our Lord assumes that there would be a Sabbath, and one for which His disciples would have a conscientious regard. He therefore directs them to pray that God in His providence would so interpose in their behalf as to prevent their flight upon that sacred day. It might not indeed be unlawful to flee for their lives on the Sabbath ; but such an occupation of the day would be painful to devout and spiritual minds, accustomed to observe it as a day of holy rest, and therefore of undistracted communion with God. The hasty conveyance of families, including aged people, with women and children, from an invading army, would occasion great uneasiness to persons who regarded the day as sacred to devotion.

No ; the Sabbath, as a Divine institution, was not abolished with the Mosaic ritual. It was not a merely Jewish institution, but belongs to all mankind from the beginning to the end of the world. The apostles and first Christians understood the mind of the Lord. They observed the sacred ordinance, in obedience to the Divine command, and transmitted the inestimable boon to posterity, so that the Church has enjoyed it to the present day.

II. We advance, as a second general proposition, that the Sabbath, as it is binding upon Christians, is divested of those appendages with which it was connected under the Mosaic economy.

1. The various other Sabbaths that were connected with it are done away. The Passover, the Pentecost,



the feast of Tabernacles, the Sabbath of the seventh year, and the Jubilee, are now no more. Their end is answered, and a better hope is brought in. The Jews, with an insane and criminal pertinacity, still affect to perform these abrogated rites, but they are not able; for they have no tabernacle, no temple, no priesthood, no altar, no sacrifice, no Holy Land. The rites themselves were nothing more than “shadows of good things to come;” and the poor performances which the modern Jews substitute for the ritual of their fathers are nothing more than the shade of shadows. There is nothing of substance in them.

2. One great motive to the observance of the Sabbath, and of every other ordinance and command of God, which Moses often presses upon the attention of the Jewish tribes,—namely, their deliverance out of the slavery of Egypt, and settlement in the land of promise,—is so far done away, as not to bind the consciences of Christians with respect to that sacred day. The great body of Christian people belong to the Gentile race, whose fathers never groaned under the rod of oppression in the land of Ham, who were never, therefore, delivered by a series of miracles, and who never occupied the land flowing with milk and honey. Their obligations, therefore, to observe the Sabbath-day arise from other causes, and especially from the redeeming love of Christ, which binds them to render in return a life of unreserved obedience. If they ought to be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, much more ought they to be subject to every ordinance that He, their Redeemer and sovereign Lord, hath given them. Gratitude for the benefit of the Sabbath, and for every other blessing, as well as a fear of His

displeasure, should ever prompt them to a strict compliance with His will.

3. In respect of the Sabbath, the penalty of death is also done away. It is right that in a Christian country the open violation of the Sabbath should be suppressed, and this institution, so intimately connected with public morals, protected by statute law ; but penalties less severe than death may suffice in the case. Under the Jewish Theocracy, indeed, the profanation of the Sabbath, as well as adultery, blasphemy, and disobedience to parents, was punished with death ; but these evils were not visited with the same penalty, by the command of God, either before that Theocracy was erected, or since it has been repealed. Yet the profaners of the Sabbath, as well as every other class of ungodly men, should be made to know that whether their sin be openly or secretly committed, they cannot escape with impunity. The Lord is the righteous Judge of all such ; and a penalty far more severe than that of temporal death will, in the eternal world, be inflicted upon all who contemn His authority, and trample upon His laws. With respect to the right observance of the Sabbath-day, an appeal is rather to be made to the consciences of men than to their apprehensions of temporal punishment ; for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ ; and there the presumptuous violators of the Sabbath, as well as of every other precept of God's law, will receive the due reward of their evil deeds. The vengeance of Almighty God will in that day fall upon all those guilty men whom human laws at present fail to reach.

One leading object of Christian legislation with respect to the Sabbath, we conceive, ought to be the

protection of the labouring poor in the enjoyment of this inestimable boon. The Sabbath is the poor man's right by the gift of God; and nothing can be more becoming in a professedly Christian legislature than to defend him against the power of the rich oppressor, who would wrest from him one of the highest privileges of his being, by compelling him to work on the day which God hath given him as a day of uninterrupted rest and devotion.

III. We advance, as a third general proposition, that on the introduction of the evangelical dispensation the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week.

The FACT of this transfer is notorious and undeniable. The first day of the week is everywhere acknowledged as the Christian Sabbath; and the unbelieving Jews, after the example of their fathers, still adhere to the seventh day, as their day of sacred rest, in obedience to the law of Moses. Following the stream of history, we find that the sanctification of the first day of the week has been the practice of the Christian church in every age from the time of the apostles; for the exceptions have been so inconsiderable as to be scarcely worth naming.

The question then arises, By whose AUTHORITY was the change made? and the only correct answer we conceive to be, The change was made by the Lord Jesus, in the exercise of that absolute dominion which He possesses as the Mediator between God and men. To Him all power is given both in heaven and in earth; and in the plenitude of that power He repealed the Levitical law which had been in force from the time of Moses; He substituted baptism for circumcision, and the holy

Eucharist for the paschal offering; He divested the Sabbath of its Jewish appendages; and He transferred it to the first day of the week. He intimated to the Jews that He would effect some changes of this kind, when He said, in answer to the men who censured the disciples for plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath, "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day." (Matt. xii. 8.) The law of the Sabbath is His law; and He can therefore modify it according to the counsel of His will. \*

The manner in which He introduced this change is worthy of special observation. He conferred distinguished honour upon the first day of the week. During the seventh day, the day of the Jewish Sabbath, He slept in the grave; but early in the *morning* of the first day of the week, He rose from the dead, and appeared to Mary Magdalene, to Mary the mother of James, and Salome; in the *afternoon* of the same day He appeared to two of His disciples on the way from Jerusalem to Emmaus; and in the *evening*, being, as it is expressly stated, "the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you;" (John xx. 19;) giving them at the same time indubitable proof that He was risen, and renewing the apostolical commission. After the lapse of another week, He appeared again to His disciples, and gave such further evidence of His resurrection as extorted from Thomas the well-known confession, "My Lord, and my God." This manifestation was also made on "the first day of the week." (John xx. 26-29.)

From this time it would appear that the disciples

\* See note E, at the end of the volume.

regarded "the first day of the week" as sacred; for at the end of seven weeks, the Lord having in the mean while ascended to heaven, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place," (Acts ii. 1-4,) when the Holy Spirit came upon them in all His fulness of grace and power. Three things are here worthy of special attention:—

1. The day which is here mentioned was "the first day of the week," or the day of the Christian Sabbath. "The first day of unleavened bread, that is, the fifteenth of Nisan, began this year on Friday evening; and this was the day on which they were to offer the wave-sheaf: and from the morrow after that day, that is, from the Saturday evening, they were to count seven weeks, or forty-nine days, which would bring the fiftieth, that is, the day of Pentecost, then to begin on the Saturday evening; so that in the Lord's-day morning it might be properly said to be *fully come*. (See Levit. xxiii. 16.)\*"

2. On the morning of this day the disciples of Christ were met together for the purpose of Divine worship. "They were all with one accord in one place." One thought occupied every mind, and one feeling actuated every heart, in the entire assembly. All their desire was toward their Lord, and the remembrance of His name.

3. On this day the Lord Jesus sent down the Holy Spirit upon His disciples, thus prepared for the promised gift, and especially upon His apostles, qualifying them for the momentous work that was assigned to them; intending by their instrumentality to introduce a new dispensation of Divine truth and grace, which should remain till the end of time. †

\* Doddridge's Family Expositor on Acts ii. 1.

† See note F, at the end of the volume.



In this manner did the **LORD JESUS** put special honour upon "the first day of the week."

Thus qualified by the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the apostles entered upon their great undertaking,—the spread of the Gospel through the nations of the earth. The opposition which they had to encounter was formidable and appalling; yet "they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark xvi. 20.) The consequence was, that Christian churches were planted in the principal cities of the Roman empire. What then was the conduct of these churches, formed by apostolic labour, and governed and directed by apostolic men, with respect to the Sabbath-day? Did they observe the seventh day, or had they no Sabbath at all? To this question we find an explicit answer in the New Testament. St. Luke, for instance, says, "We sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow." (Acts xx. 6, 7.)

Troas was the ancient Troy, a city of Phrygia, the people of which were originally heathen. A Christian church was planted there, probably by St. Paul, for he repeatedly visited Troas; and there, as well as in other places, "a door was opened" unto him, and he had cause "to triumph in Christ." (2 Cor. ii. 12–14.) It is clear from this part of the sacred narrative, that the converted heathens, the members of this church, had received with Christianity a weekly Sabbath, a day sacred to devotion. On that day they left their homes,

and suspended their worldly business, assembling for objects purely spiritual. They "came together to break bread;" that is, to receive the Lord's supper; and Paul preached to them for several successive hours. He was, indeed, "to depart the next morning;" but, according to the tenor of the history, his departure was not the occasion of their meeting. "*When* the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." The meeting is not spoken of as casual, but was rather held according to regular practice; and the day which these devout followers of Christ thus sanctified under apostolic sanction, was "the first day of the week."

Further light is cast upon the subject of our present inquiry by the direction which St. Paul gave to the Corinthians respecting their charitable contributions for the relief of the suffering Christians in the Holy Land. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) The apostle intended soon to visit Corinth; and he was wishful that, on his arrival, the contributions of the people should be completed, so that no delay might take place in forwarding them to the persons for whose benefit they were intended. He was anxious that there should "be no gatherings" when he came. Hence it is manifest that what St. Paul recommended was a weekly contribution deposited in some particular place; for had the people retained these contributions in their own hands, there must have been a general "gathering" when he should arrive. In

giving this counsel the apostle assumed that they met together on "the first day of the week," doubtless to "break" the sacramental "bread," and to perform other acts of worship, as did the disciples at Troas; and he recommends them, on these occasions, to present their charitable donations, according to their ability, that, when he came, the entire amount might be ready for immediate transmission to the persecuted Christians in Judea.

The directions which St. Paul gave to the Corinthians, he had previously given to the churches of Galatia; so that those churches also, scattered over an extensive district of country,—the great body of whom, like the Christians of Troas and of Corinth, were converted heathens,—had all of them their assemblies on "the first day of the week."

Here then we have direct proof of a weekly Sabbath in the apostolic churches in general; for we have no reason to believe that the churches of Troas, Corinth, and Galatia were peculiar in this respect. The people who constituted these churches, being generally converted Heathens, had no Sabbath but that which the Gospel gave them; it gave them, not the seventh, but "the first day of the week," which the people, of course, observed in accordance with the evangelical instruction which they received from their inspired teachers.

In giving to their heathen converts "the first day of the week," as their Sabbath, the apostles doubtless acted according to the Divine direction, and not upon their own responsibility. They were all Jews by birth and education; and their personal prejudices were all in favour of Jewish laws and institutions. Had they,

therefore, been left to themselves, in this matter, they would unquestionably have given their Gentile converts the Mosaic Sabbath, and would have left the Jewish converts to the observance of the Sabbath which they already possessed. The conclusion, therefore, to which we are inevitably led, with respect to the Sabbath, is, that the apostles were overruled, and acted under the guidance and authority of the Lord Jesus, whose servants they professedly were, and from whom they received their commission.

But on this subject we are not left to mere inference. We have the express testimony of Scripture, that in the fulfilment of their apostolical charge they acted merely as the servants of Christ's will. On this point St. Paul is explicit. Thus he speaks :—"I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received." (1 Cor. xv. 3.) "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. i. 11, 12.) "By revelation He made known unto me the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." (Eph. iii. 3, 5.) "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) "Ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus." (1 Thess. iv. 2.) St. Peter expresses himself to the same effect. "Be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." (2 Peter iii. 2.) "Remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ," says St. Jude, verse 17 ; and St. John

adds, in the same strain, "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us." (1 John iv. 6.)

These high and sacred claims are fully justified by the circumstances of the case. In addition to the verbal instruction which the greater part of the apostles had received from the Lord Jesus in the course of His ministry, He was "seen of them forty days" after His resurrection, "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." (Acts i. 3.) At the same time, He promised them the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to lead them into all the truth; and declared that His own presence should be with them to the very end of their course. (John xvi. 13; Matt. xxviii. 20.) The instruction which the apostles received from our Lord in His own person, and the revelations which were made to them by the Holy Spirit, are, of course, all embodied in the doctrines which they taught, and in the various institutions which they introduced.\*

Of all the incredible theories that a perverted ingenuity has ever devised, it would be difficult to mention one that is more incredible and devoid of evidence, than the theory of a class of anti-Sabbatarians, who contend that the Christian Sabbath is what they call an "ecclesiastical institution." In other words, that the Divine Author of Christianity, having given to mankind a complete system of saving truth, and of religious and moral duty, but having appointed no time in particular for the exposition and defence of that truth, and for the practice of duties strictly religious, the members of His church throughout the world, with the concurrence of the apostles, agreed of their own accord to appoint "the first day of the week" as their Sabbath, and have

\* See Note G, at the end of the volume.



observed it as such to the present day. We should like to ask these theorizers, *who* among the first Christian converts proposed this arrangement to the churches of every nation? *When* was the recommendation adopted? *By what means* was the general unanimity secured? Was there a meeting of all the Christians in one place, when this very beneficial measure was agreed upon; or was the negotiation carried on by means of messengers? What part did the apostles act while the matter was pending? Did they give no advice in the case? or did they vote with the multitude, and thus put themselves on a level with uninspired men, women, and children? There were many differences of opinion among the early Christians; and when the Greek and Latin churches attempted in after ages to settle the time of Easter, they had terrible quarrels on the subject, and have not come to any agreement to this day. How, then, was the question of the Sabbath, if it was left to human decision, settled at once and for ever, so as to be acquiesced in by Christian Jew, and Gentile Greek and Roman, Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free? Why did they determine to observe "the first day of the week," in preference to every other?

Till these questions are satisfactorily answered, we shall adhere to the view which has been entertained by not a few of the wisest and best men that ever adorned the Christian profession,—men of every age and section of the church,—that the Sabbath which was instituted at the creation, and renewed to the Jewish people in the time of Moses, was transferred by the Almighty Son of God from the seventh to "the first day of the week;" and that, in the execution of His purpose, He employed the apostles as the ministers of His will.

In this judgment we are confirmed by the decisive fact which remains next to be mentioned ; namely, that in the book which closes the canon of Holy Scripture, His name is directly applied to this sacred institution. "I was in the Spirit on *THE LORD'S DAY*," says the last of the surviving apostles ; (Rev. i. 10 ;) thus giving to the Christian Sabbath its appropriate title, and in effect declaring the authority by which the change of the day was made. Never did the apostles speak of themselves as independent teachers of religion, but always as "the servants of Christ," in whose work they were employed, and to whom they expected to give an account. The Christian Sabbath, then, is "*THE LORD'S DAY* ;" the day on which He rose from the dead, having finished the mighty work of redemption, and gained the dominion of the world ; the day on which He therefore sent down the Holy Spirit, "the Lord and Giver of life," so as to open a new dispensation of truth and mercy, rich in blessing to all the nations of the earth ; the day which He claims as His own, and which He has given to the church and the world, not only as a day of rest, but of religious duty and enjoyment.

The Sabbath is "the Lord's day," as the holy Eucharist is "the Lord's supper ;" (1 Cor. xi. 20 ;) both of them being alike His own ordination. The whole of this day, then, belongs to Him, and is to be appropriated to objects connected with His glory, and with His purposes of mercy to mankind.\* To the ancient Jews it was said, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God ;" (Exod. xx. 10 ;) and an inspired apostle, speaking of "the first day of the week," declares it to be "the Lord's day : " thus claiming the same Divine

\* See Note H, at the end of the volume.

sanction for the Sabbatic institution after the change of the day had been made under the evangelical dispensation, and the peculiar rites of Judaism had passed away for ever. The day was changed, but the Sabbath remained. As well might men claim a human origin for "the Lord's supper," as for "the Lord's day." Both are equally His ordinances.

Some persons have expressed their surprise that the observance of the Sabbath is nowhere enjoined in the New Testament by express precept; and that there is no positive command of God to discontinue the sanctification of the seventh day, and to substitute for it "the first day of the week." But they do not consider all the circumstances of the case. There needed no positive command, requiring of Christians, as such, the observance of a weekly Sabbath; because the moral law, which demands this observance, forms a part of the very substance of the Gospel. That law is not only declared to be binding upon all believers in Christ, but is written by the Spirit of God upon their hearts. (Heb. viii. 10.) It forms an essential element in the teaching of our Lord, and in that of His apostles; and one declared object of our Saviour's sacrificial death was, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled" in those who, believing in Him, "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 3, 4.) The only question, then, that could arise in the apostolical churches related to the change in the day,—the transfer of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week; and God so mercifully ordered the matter, that, so far as the believing Jews were concerned, the change was gradually introduced. The Jewish law of the Sabbath was a part of the statute law of the land, the

violation of which was a capital crime, to be punished with death. Had the apostles, therefore, publicly preached against the Jewish Sabbath, and directed their Jewish converts to disregard it, the consequence must have been popular tumults, and the shedding of Christian blood under the sanction of God's law ; for the national prejudices and feeling of even pious men would have been shocked beyond endurance. For a long time many of the Jewish converts kept two weekly Sabbaths ; the seventh day, in compliance with the Mosaic statute ; and the first day, in obedience to apostolic teaching ; and St. Paul directed that the scruples of the believing Jews should be treated with respect. He would allow no man to usurp any dominion over the conscience of his fellow ; saying, " Who art thou that judgest another man's servant ? To his own master," not to thee, " he standeth or falleth." (Rom. xiv. 4.)

While St. Paul, however, freely allowed the believing Jews, if they deemed it their duty, to sanctify the seventh day, and to observe the other seasons which their law rendered sacred, he resisted all attempts to impose those institutions upon the Gentile churches. To the Galatians, therefore, converted Gentiles, who had been misled by Jewish zealots, he said, " Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." (Gal. iv. 10, 11.) The Colossians he admonished to the same effect : " Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days : which are a shadow of things to come ; but the body is of Christ." (Col. ii. 16, 17.) In this manner the apostle taught that these peculiarities of the Levitical law were

types of good things to come; but those good things having come already, the types have lost their value, and are of no further importance. If the pious Jews, from a mistaken sense of duty, would still adhere to these abrogated forms, the apostle would allow them to follow their own convictions; but he would not suffer them to be imposed upon the Gentile converts, to whom they had never been matters of duty. Yet St. Paul did not with one hand pull down what he had built up with the other. By the "Sabbath-days," therefore, which he taught the Colossians to disregard, he meant the Jewish Sabbaths of every kind. He could not mean "the Lord's day," which he instructed his spiritual children at Troas, at Corinth, and in Galatia to sanctify, especially by public assemblies, devotion, and acts of charity, and which he himself sanctified in the same manner.

If there are no admonitions concerning the sanctification of the Christian Sabbath in any of the apostolical Epistles, the just inference is, not that the churches had no such institution, but that they were so observant of this branch of religious duty, as not to be open to rebuke, as some of them unhappily were on other subjects. The Galatians had greatly departed from the truth in theory; and the practice of the Corinthians was in many respects highly reprehensible; but the apostle, as we have seen, assumes that they were all observant of their duty with regard to "the first day of the week," their observance of which he, in effect, acknowledged, when he directed them on that day to make collections for the poor.

IV. We advance, as a fourth general proposition, that the observance of the Sabbath is of the utmost importance.



1. It is important to the health and happiness of mankind. We have already observed that animal strength is unable to endure incessant labour, especially that which requires great physical exertion; and that by such labour life is inevitably shortened. To the greater part of mankind, who are subjected to severe toil in mines, in manufactures, and in the cultivation of the soil, as a means of subsistence, the Sabbath is indeed a refreshment and a blessing; and when it is truly sanctified, so as to be a day of holy rest, it is a heaven upon earth. Almighty God, in the tenderness of His mercy, has given to the poor man, as well as to his rich neighbour, this day of sacred rest; and that both should be happy in the hallowed enjoyment of it, is at once pleasing to God and to good men. Generally speaking, it is the only day of the week in which the labouring man can enjoy free and unrestricted intercourse with his family, and thus realise the happiness and benefits of domestic life; his duties frequently severing him from them during the greater part of the week-days. On the Sabbath his children can climb upon his knees; and with them and their mother he can enjoy a free interchange of sanctified thought and feeling, and join in the public and domestic services of religion, thus anticipating their final union in heaven.

2. It is important to public morals. Society cannot prosper, nor, indeed, be permanently kept together, in the absence of moral principle. Wretched in the extreme must the people be where parents generally neglect their children, and where children despise and disobey their parents; where the masters oppress their servants, and servants are unfaithful in their offices of trust; where the rich grind the faces of the poor, and

the poor are envious, discontented, and dishonest; where those who buy and sell are regardless of truth and fair dealing, utter falsehood without restraint, and cheat and defraud one another as a matter of course. There is no security for life, property, and character, in the absence of justice, benevolence, and truth.

But then, religion is the only sure basis of true morality. Men must "fear God" in order that they may permanently "work righteousness." Those who love God are the only people who keep His commandments. The man that "walks humbly with God," and only he, will "do justly, and love mercy;" because he only has power over sin, and is thoroughly imbued with a love of that which is holy and upright. Whatever, therefore, tends to promote vital godliness, tends, in the same proportion, to advance the public welfare. "Righteousness exalteth a nation;" for it makes men industrious, honest, and benevolent. It gives them confidence in one another; it promotes security and peace, and brings upon all the blessing of God, which "maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." (Prov. x. 22.)

But religion never flourishes in the neglect of the Sabbath, or even in the lax observance of it. In order that the principles of piety may be sustained, and strengthened, and preserved in vigorous exercise in the minds of men, they must come together, for the purpose of worshipping God in the use of His ordinances; for, in the neglect of these, godliness languishes and decays. To obtain a renewal of their spiritual and moral "strength," men must "wait upon the Lord." Hence the great importance of the Sabbath. The prevalence of ungodliness, and laxity of morals, are the direct

consequence of indifference to this sacred institution. Many a sinner, dying in the agony of despair, and many a felon on the scaffold, have attributed their guilt and ruin, in the first instance, to the profanation of the Sabbath, and the consequent neglect of the house of God.

The general demoralization of Papal countries, and the low state of religion in most of the Protestant communities on the European continent, are justly attributable to this cause.\* Among them, in too many instances, the Sabbath is rather spent as a holiday, and a day of recreation, than as a day which is sacred to God. Romanists employ the Sabbath as a day of worldly labour, of amusements, and of public worship; and nominal Protestants employ it much in the same manner. The truth, however, is, that every attempt that is made to secularize the Sabbath is an attempt to weaken the hold which religion has upon the minds of men, and, by

\* A missionary in South Africa thus writes, under the date of May 20th, 1868; showing that the views of Luther concerning the Sabbath are still perpetuated among the people who bear his name:—

“But a few miles beyond Thornton House is a German settlement, with a Lutheran church, under the pastoral care of a minister who entertains loose views of the obligations of the Christian Sabbath, neither he nor his people scrupling, after morning service, to spend the remaining part of the day in secular pursuits. This cannot fail to have an injurious effect, not only on the white people around, but also on the Kaffirs, who will be likely to form a low estimate of a religion, the professed adherents of which desecrate their own sacred day. We find German ministers and missionaries everywhere in South Africa, a few only excepted, both by precept and example discountenancing the moral obligation of the Sabbath, which we cannot but view as a serious drawback from their otherwise laudable efforts to Christianize the heathen.”—Wesleyan Missionary Notices for September, 1868.

necessary consequence, to corrupt the morals of society. The statesmen who provide Sunday amusements for the public, so as to draw away adult people from the house of God, and children from their Sunday-schools, will soon find it necessary to provide an increased number of prisons and reformatories; for vice and crime will unavoidably ensue when the restraints of religion are withdrawn.

V. We advance, as a fifth general proposition, that the duties of the Christian Sabbath are plain and obvious. Among these we may specify,—

1. The consecration of the day to God. This comprehends abstinence from all secular employments, except such as may be strictly necessary in order to the preservation of life and health. The mind should be divested of worldly thoughts and cares, and the attention directed exclusively to God and the things of God. All worldly conversation should be avoided; all secular studies and reading, such as profane history, books of mere science, and the literature of heathen Greece and Rome. All journeys of pleasure and business are to be avoided; for we are neither to think our own thoughts, nor to speak our own words, nor pursue our own objects of gain, or of unsanctified gratification.

2. The duties of the closet should have a due share of attention on the Lord's day. Good men should retire into secret, examine themselves, and review their past conduct; confess to God their sins, follies, and neglects; pray for pardoning mercy; return grateful thanks for the blessings of providence and of grace; intercede for the church, for the world, and for individuals; form resolutions of future diligence in the service of God: at the same time, reading the Holy

Scriptures, and other books of spiritual instruction, for the improvement of personal piety.

3. Domestic worship and instruction are no less appropriate to the Lord's day. The worship of God in the family should indeed be practised daily: but as religion is the proper business of the Sabbath, on that day, generally speaking, family worship should be more extended; and those who conduct it should be more copious in confession, thanksgiving, supplication, and intercession, than at other times. They should bring before God the wants of the church and of the world. Children, and such other members of the family as need instruction, should also be taught the way of the Lord diligently and with kindness.

4. The public worship of God is especially a duty of the Sabbath-day. In such worship we include meetings for prayer, and for spiritual intercourse, as well as attendance upon the ministry of the Gospel, and upon the Supper of the Lord. These services of God's sanctuary ought not to be attended as matter of mere form and habit, but with holy zeal, and an earnest desire to please God, and to obtain His mercy for ever. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 24.) "Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary: I am the Lord." (Lev. xix. 30.) The special presence of God is secured to the assemblies of His worshippers by express promise, so that none need ever wait upon Him in vain.

5. Works of mercy should also, on the Lord's day, occupy a due share of attention. Among these we may particularly mention the instruction of the ignorant in the things of God, and the visitation of the sick. Concerning these duties we may derive important lessons



from the example of our Saviour. On the Sabbath-day He not only taught the people, but also wrought many of His miracles, for the double purpose of confirming His doctrine, and of alleviating human misery. We are acting in the true spirit of His holy and benevolent religion, when we are found on this day comforting and praying with the afflicted, and teaching the children of the poor, forming them to habits of piety and virtue.

6. Nor ought Christians ever to forget, that, according to the law of the Sabbath, their cattle are to rest on that day, as well as themselves. This is God's requirement, and it cannot be violated with impunity. The gentle conveyance of God's worshippers to His house by a carriage, in cases of necessity, we conceive to be no violation of this law; but the employment of the ox, the ass, the horse, on the Sabbath-day, in ordinary labour, and for the purpose of worldly gain, is certainly forbidden, and is therefore carefully to be avoided by all men. God has subjected the brute creation to the service of man; but that subjection has its prescribed limits, and cannot be abused without guilt.

VI. Our sixth proposition is, that the Scripture doctrine of the Sabbath should occupy the special attention of the ministers and pastors of Christ's church.

St. Paul stated to the elders of Ephesus, that during the three years of his residence among them, he had "not shunned to declare all the counsel of God:" and in this respect he is an example to all who are called to preach the Gospel, and to sustain the pastoral charge. They are to expound and defend all the various doctrines of the Gospel; and they are, with no less fidelity and zeal, to expound and enforce every religious and moral duty which the Gospel enjoins.

Among these duties, those which relate to the Sabbath-day possess a special importance, because of their connexion with the entire system of true religion. A careless violator of the Sabbath is a neglecter of salvation, the working out of which requires a diligent use of that holy ordinance. A presumptuous violator of the Sabbath is a rebel against God, living in direct opposition to his Maker's will. The various forms of Sabbath-desecration, therefore, the ministers of Christ are in faithfulness to Him bound to expose and denounce; and the blessings consequent upon the sanctification of the Lord's day they are bound to declare and recommend. In the exercise of discipline, too, ministers are required, by virtue of their office, to repress all approaches to the profanation of that most sacred institution: otherwise they are faithless to Christ, and bring upon themselves the guilt of other men's sins.

The entire subject of the Sabbath possesses a profound interest, when viewed in connexion with Christian Missions to the heathen. No finite mind can fully comprehend the benefits, personal, domestic, social, spiritual, and eternal, which are consequent upon the introduction of Christianity, with all its holy truths and ordinances, into a heathen country. Let us think of savages and idolaters, of murderers and cannibals, converted into Christians; becoming devout attendants upon the worship of God, sanctifying the Sabbath, and breathing a spirit of peace and holy hope, where all before was cruelty, misery, despair, and blood. The man whose life and labours are directed to the accomplishment of such a change in the character and condition of men is the truest philanthropist; and great is his reward in heaven.

#### IV.—HISTORY OF THE SABBATH IN PROTESTANT ENGLAND.

IN Roman Catholic countries generally, it is well known that the Sabbath-day is desecrated without restraint; the theatres and other places of amusement being frequented, and business transacted, as on other days. Shops are open, and bricklayers, carpenters, smiths, and other classes of workpeople, pursue their ordinary occupations, especially during the intervals of public worship.

Among Protestant communities that sacred day is observed with different degrees of strictness. Many of the continental Protestants follow too closely the laxity of their neighbours of the Papal Church, to their great spiritual injury, and so as to dishonour this holy ordinance of God.\* The natives of Scotland, there is reason to believe, taken as a whole, are the strictest observers of the Sabbath in the world; and the people of England, generally speaking, are second only to them. In both countries, however, there are many sad exceptions, especially in the large towns and cities.

\* "In England a Sabbath-breaker [Sabbath-breaking] is taken for a sin inconsistent with grace. In the Low Countries, Helvetia, France, and most other of the Reformed Churches, much of it is taken for no sin at all; but *we* are censured as superstitious herein."—Baxter's "Disputations of Right to the Sacraments," p. 330. Edition of 1658.

It has often been observed that England is indebted to the Puritanism of the early part of the seventeenth century for just views of the sanctity of the Sabbath, and for that habit of observing it which generally obtains. There is some truth in the statement, but it needs qualification. The Church of England, in her constitution, is as strictly Sabbatarian as Puritanism ever was; and the Puritans who so nobly defended the Sabbath at the period just mentioned, did nothing more than maintain and carry out into practice the doctrine which they had learned from the Church's Liturgy and Book of Homilies. Luther and Calvin both spoke ambiguously concerning the Sabbath; but the English Reformers, judging from the formularies which they prepared for general use, and from their other writings, regarded the Sabbath as a perpetual ordinance of God, enjoined by the moral law, obedience to which is as much the duty of Christians as it was of the ancient Jews, to whom that law was directly addressed.

In proof of this fact it will be sufficient to refer to the form for the administration of the holy communion, in which direction is given that "the priest shall rehearse distinctly *ALL* the Ten Commandments: and the people, kneeling, shall, after every commandment, ask God mercy for their transgression of the same." After the fourth commandment has been "rehearsed," as well as after every other, the people are instructed to pray, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." When all the commandments have been read by "the priest," the entire assembly unite in the response, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and write *ALL* these *THY LAWS* in our hearts, we beseech Thee." This most sacred and impressive service would be a solemn

mockery, on the supposition that the Sabbath was nothing more than a Jewish ordinance; and that the observance of it by Christians is required only by human authority, and not by the law of God. No distinction is here made between the fourth commandment, which enjoins the sanctification of the Sabbath, and any other precept of the Decalogue. All are equally recognised as God's commandments.

With this part of the communion service the Book of Homilies, which was "appointed to be read in churches," is in perfect agreement. In the "Homily of the place and time of prayer," it is said, "God hath given express charge to all men, that upon the Sabbath-day, which is now our Sunday, they should cease from all weekly and work-day labour, to the intent that, like as God Himself wrought six days, and rested the seventh, and blessed and sanctified it, and consecrated it to quietness, and rest from labour; even so God's obedient people should use the Sunday holily, and rest from their common and daily business, and also give themselves wholly to heavenly exercises of God's true religion and service. So that God doth not only command the observation of this holy day, but also by His own example doth stir and provoke us to the diligent keeping of the same. Good natural children will not only become obedient to the commandment of their parents, but also have a diligent eye to their doings, and gladly follow the same. So, if we will be the children of our Heavenly Father, we must be careful to keep the Christian Sabbath-day, which is the Sunday, not only for that it is God's express commandment, but also to declare ourselves to be loving children, in following the example of our gracious Lord and Father."



On this subject the trumpet of Latimer, one of the most distinguished of our martyred Reformers, gave no uncertain sound. Thus he speaks in his own racy and pithy manner: "We read a story in the fifteenth chapter of the book of the Numbers, that there was a fellow which gathered sticks upon the Sabbath-day. He was a despiser of God's ordinances and laws, like as they that now-a-days go about their business when they should hear the word of God, and come to the common prayer.....Now Moses and the people consulted with the Lord what they should do; how they should punish that fellow which had so transgressed the Sabbath-day. He shall die, saith God: which thing is an ensample for us to take heed that we transgress not the law of the Sabbath-day. For though God punish us not by-and-by, as this man was punished; yet He is the very selfsame God that He was before, and will punish one day, either here or else in the other world, where the punishment shall be everlasting. Likewise in the seventeenth chapter of the Prophet Jeremy, God threateneth His fearful wrath and anger unto those which do profane His Sabbath-day. Again, He promiseth His favour and all prosperity to them that will keep the holy days, saying, 'Princes and kings shall go through thy gates:' that is to say, Thou shalt be in prosperity, in wealth, and great estimation amongst thy neighbours. Again, 'If ye will not keep My Sabbath-day, I will kindle a fire in your gates:' that is to say, I will destroy you; I will bring you to nought, and burn your cities with fire. These words pertain as well unto us at this time, as they pertained to them at their time; for God hateth the disallowing of the Sabbath, as well now as then: for He is and remaineth still the

old God. He will have us to keep His Sabbath, as well now as then. For on the Sabbath-day God's seed-plough goeth : that is to say, the ministry of His word is executed ; for the ministering of God's word is God's plough. Now upon the Sundays God sendeth His husbandmen to come and till ; He sendeth His callers to come and call to the wedding, to bid the guests, that is, all the world, to come to the supper. Therefore, for the reverence of God, consider these things ; consider who calleth, namely, God. Consider, again, who be the guests,—all ye. Therefore I call you in God's name, come to this supper ; hallow the Sabbath-day ; that is, do your holy-day work ; come to this supper ; for this day was appointed of God to the end that His word should be taught and heard. Prefer not your own business, therefore, before the hearing of the word of God. Remember the story of that man which gathered sticks upon the holy day, and was put to death by the consent of God : where God showed not Himself to be a cruel God ; but He would give a warning unto the whole world by that man, that all the world should keep holy His Sabbath-day. The almighty, ever-living God give us grace to live so in this miserable world, that we may at the end come to the great Sabbath-day, where there shall be everlasting joy and gladness." \*

Such is the doctrine concerning the Sabbath which the English Reformers held, and gave to the Protestant Church, of which they were the founders. They evidently regarded the Sabbath as a perpetual ordinance of God, transferred from the seventh to the first day of

\* Latimer's Sermon on "A King that married his Son," preached in Lincolnshire, 1552.

the week, and designed to be spent, not in worldly business, nor in idle amusements and diversions, but devoted to God, in acts purely religious. Many pious clergymen, in different parts of the country, endeavoured to give practical effect to these views, and with very encouraging success. But they at length met with determined resistance; an attempt being made by the Court, and several of the leading men in the Church, to restore the laxity of Popish times, to elevate saints' days in the public estimation, and to depress the day of the Lord. For this purpose, James the First, who had himself been trained in Presbyterian Scotland,—and from whom, therefore, better things might have been expected,—issued his famous “Book of Sports,” forbidding bear-baiting, bull-baiting, interludes, and bowling, on the Sabbath-day; but giving a direct sanction to dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, May-games, Whitsun-ales, morrice-dances, and the erection of May-poles, after the people had attended the full service in their several parish-churches. This “book,” or royal proclamation, he directed to be publicly read on the Lord's day, at the time of Divine worship, particularly in Lancashire, where the Romanists were numerous; giving them to understand that they might conform to the Protestant religion without “remembering the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.”

This most unwise and impious measure was repeated in the reign of Charles the First, who made it additionally stringent and offensive by extending it to the kingdom generally, and by requiring the clergy to read it to their respective congregations on pain of suspension; which was felt by many of them to be an intolerable hardship, and a wanton abuse of the regal power.

Some of them read it, and at the same time characterized it as "the word of man;" and then read, in contrast to it, the fourth commandment, as "the word of God." The pulpit and the sacred desk were thus placed in direct opposition to the Government: a state of things the disastrous effects of which it was easy to foresee. Some of the bishops were also very active in pressing upon their clergy a full compliance with this unjust mandate.\*

Not a few of the clergy, however, refused to violate their consciences and ordination-vows by compliance with the royal will; in consequence of which they were deprived of their livings, and with their families were reduced to beggary and ruin; while the best people belonging to their congregations regarded them as the victims of a cruel persecution for righteousness' sake.†

Richard Baxter, who lived in those unhappy times, gives a graphic description of scenes which he had himself witnessed as the result of this interference of the civil power with the day which Almighty God claims as His own. "I cannot forget," says he, "that in my youth in those late times, when we lost the labours of some of our conformable godly teachers, for not reading publicly the Book for sports and dancing on the Lord's days, one of my father's own tenants was the town-piper, hired by the year, for many years together, and the place of the dancing assembly was not an hundred yards from our door; and we could not on the Lord's day either read a chapter, or pray, or sing a psalm, or catechise, or instruct a servant, but with the

\* Neal's "History of the Puritans," vol. i., pp. 486, 487, 568-571. Edition of 1754.

† See note I, at the end of the volume.

noise of the pipe and tabor, and the whooting in the street, continually in our ears. And even among a tractable people we were the common scorn of all the rabble in the streets, and called Puritans, Precisians, and hypocrites, because we rather chose but to read the Scriptures, than to do as they did; though there was no savour of Nonconformity in our family. And when the people were allowed by the Book to play and dance out of public service time, they could so hardly break off their sports, that many a time the reader was fain to stay till the piper and players would give over. And sometimes the morrice-dancers would come into the church in all their linen, and scarfs, and antic dresses, with the morrice-bells jingling at their legs; and as soon as the common prayer was read, did haste out presently to their play again." \*

Revolting as were these riotous and disorderly scenes on the day of the Lord, and inconsistent as they were with the spirit of true devotion, they had many advocates, both lay and clerical; some of whom were men of learning, and of high ecclesiastical authority. Among the foremost of them was Dr. Peter Heylin, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who published a large and elaborate "*History of the Sabbath*," in which he stoutly maintains that the Sabbath, as an ordinance of God, was never heard of till the time of Moses; that it ended with the whole Levitical economy; so that the Christian Sabbath rests entirely upon the authority of the church, like saints' days, and the sacred seasons in which the birth of Christ, His fasting in the wilderness, His death, and His ascension to heaven, are commemo-

\* Baxter on the "*Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day*," pp. 116, 117. Edition of 1671.



rated. He dedicated his work to the king, and expresses his approval of the attempt which His Majesty was then making to promote popular amusements on the Lord's day, connecting the public worship of God with dancing, and other forms of profane merriment.

The theory which Heylin defended was maintained with equal pertinacity, and in even a worse spirit, by Dr. Pocklington, chaplain to the Bishop of Lincoln, who published a long sermon, which he had preached before the Right Reverend prelate, at a visitation of the clergy, entitled, "Sunday no Sabbath." The same doctrine was avowed and vindicated by Dr. Prideaux, the Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford; by Mr. Brerewood, the Gresham Professor; by Dr. Francis White, the Bishop of Ely; and by Edward Fisher, Esq., who endeavoured to persuade the good people of England, that "the keeping holy the Lord's day was appointed by the Christian church; and that the morality and Divine institution of the Lord's day are mere fictions."

In the mean while the Puritan clergy, though frowned upon by the Government, and by their ecclesiastical superiors, not only submitted to suffer for the truth's sake, but wrote in defence of their principles with zeal and ability. Dr. Bound, a Suffolk clergyman, had published, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, an eloquent, pious, and argumentative volume on the Sabbath, maintaining its Divine and perpetual obligation; and when King Charles, with the aid of the High Churchmen of his time, attempted the introduction of Sunday amusements generally, the Puritan ministers raised the warning voice in the pulpit, and with their pens defended the day of the Lord with great earnestness, and with

a strength and copiousness of argument, which have completely exhausted the subject, and left little for subsequent writers to advance on the same side. But unhappily there was then no free press in England. No book was allowed to be printed without a licence; and the men who possessed the formidable power of condemning to oblivion the fruits of scholarship and genius, were hostile to the strict observance of the Lord's day; so that, for a time, the advocates of Sabbath-desecration had everything their own way, no books on the other side being allowed to appear. Such books, however, were prepared; and when the Long Parliament assembled, and instituted a searching inquiry into existing abuses, liberty was given to defend the Sabbath as a Divine ordinance. Manuscripts, which had for years slept in the desks of their authors, or had been only read in private circles, were now committed to the press, and administered a seasonable rebuke to men, sustaining the office of Christ's ministers, who had presumptuously attempted to supersede the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, while they were accustomed to pray that it might be written upon their hearts.

The following very able men took a part in this momentous controversy, and rendered essential service to the cause of truth and righteousness:—Mr. Richard Bernard, of Batcome; \* Dr. Twisse, of Newbury; Mr. John White, of Dorchester; Mr. John Ley, of Great Budworth; Mr. Nicholas Byfield, of Chester; Mr. George Walker, of London; Mr. Giles Collier, of Blockley; and especially Mr. Daniel Cawdrey and Mr. Herbert Palmer, who united in the publication of two ample volumes; the largest work in defence of the

\* See note K, at the end of the volume.

Sabbath that ever appeared in the English language. The authors were both members of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. At a later period Mr. John Wells, Richard Baxter, Dr. Young, Dr. Owen, and Dr. Wallis appeared on the same side, when the anti-Sabbatarian doctrine was revived in England after the Restoration, and when some zealous men contended that the seventh, and not the first, day of the week was still the Sabbath which God requires mankind to observe and sanctify.

The issuing of the "Book of Sports," by the first two kings of the Stuart dynasty, and the very decided part that was taken by the leading men in the Church in support of that inopportune and objectionable measure,—intended as it was to prevent the strict observance of the Sabbath in England, and render it, in this respect, conformable to the practice of Popish countries,—led to the most calamitous results. They served to alienate the more religious part of the community from the Throne and the Church, and thus facilitated the overthrow of both. For when the Long Parliament assembled, and a rupture took place between that body and the King, great numbers of godly people, who probably cared little about secular politics, felt it to be with them a matter of conscience to take the Parliamentary side, in opposition to the Court party, who had so grievously offended against a commandment of Almighty God. The King was at length brought to the scaffold, as was also the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had cruelly oppressed his clergy on account of their regard for the Sabbath; and the Episcopal Church was for a time subverted. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know

them?" To tamper with the ordinances of God, and with the conscientious convictions of the men that truly fear Him, is equally impious, presumptuous, and impolitic. The best supporters of a throne, and of any existing institution, are the men who are earnest and sincere in matters of religious duty; for there is an energy and a consistency in their course of action which we look for in vain among the mere men of the world. The probability is, that had the unhappy Charles, and the unwise Churchmen of his age, encouraged the observance of the Sabbath, instead of promoting its desecration; and had they respected the conscientious scruples of godly clergymen, instead of imposing silence upon them, and vexing their congregations; the King would have ended his days in peace, and the Church of the Reformation would have remained in unimpaired efficiency and honour. The rights of conscience ought never to be invaded; and the laws of God are given, not to be modified or superseded by men, however dignified by rank and power, but to be revered and obeyed by all.

After these statements, it is but justice to observe, that while many of the clergy in the time of Charles I. gave up the Sabbath as an ordinance of God, and laboured with all their might to remove the apprehension of its sanctity from the minds of the common people, and while individuals in subsequent ages sustaining the sacred office have adopted and avowed the same principles, the greatest and best men among the clergy, from the time of the Reformation, have entertained directly opposite views. The men who have been distinguished by intellectual power, and by profound biblical and theological scholarship,—and, most of all, the men who

have sanctified their learning by a devotional spirit and habits,—have all regarded the Sabbath as a gift from God to the whole human race ; a gift rich in blessing, and therefore to be gratefully received and religiously observed. Testimonies to this effect might be adduced to an unlimited extent. We will confine ourselves to a few ; which are, however, worthy of special attention. They cannot fail to impress every thoughtful mind.

RICHARD HOOKER.

“The moral law requiring therefore a seventh part throughout the age of the whole world to be that way employed, although with us the day be changed in regard of a new revolution begun by our Saviour Christ, yet the same proportion of time continueth which was before, because in reference to the benefit of creation, and now much more of renovation thereunto added by Him which was the Prince of the world to come, we are bound to account the sanctification of one day in seven a duty which God’s immutable law doth exact for ever.”\*

BISHOP ANDREWES.

“Heathen men, by the light of nature, have seen that every thing is the best ordered when it hath but one office, and is ordained to do but one thing : that is, whatsoever is done, it must thoroughly be done ; it must be alonely done. The reason is, because we are finite creatures ; and if two things be done at once, one part of

\* Hooker’s Works, vol. ii., pp. 497, 498. Edition of 1836.



our thoughts will be taken from the other. We cannot wholly do two things at once. This is our case. But it was the case of our father Adam in innocency. Because he had a natural soul and finite, therefore he was not able wholly to attend the dressing of the garden in six days, and to intend the whole sanctification of the day of rest, commanded Gen. ii. 3. Now, because of this, God would have a solemn profession of body and soul: and therefore this was the end why God instituted, blessed, and sanctified the seventh day; so that it cometh for a remedy against distraction, to be intended to any other use, especially in the solemn worship of the Lord. That takes up the whole man, and necessarily suffereth no distraction. Therefore it doth not suffer him to be intended for any other use. Now, if being then in that case *he* could not; *we* that have more impediments to withdraw us, we had need of a remedy against our distraction. And thus cometh the rest in; because that this total, solemn sanctification cannot be performed without ceasing from the rest of our works and labour; because, unless we do rest, we cannot sanctify. Therefore is it that this is commanded, with our sanctification, a day of rest: otherwise, whereas our resting hindereth our sanctification, it must be taken away. And, indeed, Christ doth acknowledge, (Mark ii. 27,) that man was not made for the rest, but for sanctification. Sanctification was his end, and man was made for it. Rest is a subordinate end, and man was not made for it, but rather that for man.

“There is in the commandment another word, *Remember*; and because that is properly of a thing past, therefore it referreth to some place or time before; and there is no mention of a Sabbath but in two places

before : one, Exod. xvi. 23-25. But that is not it ; for God in the end adding, ‘ God blessed it,’ referreth us to that place where the same words are, Gen. ii. 3 ; and so we know that we are referred thither. And by this occasion falleth in that first question that many think it is a ceremony ; and sundry are so persuaded, and hold that men are not bound to sanctify it since Christ. Our Saviour, in case of difference and resolution of polygamy, hath taken a good course and order. He goeth to the beginning ; how it was *ab initio, non sic ab initio*. ‘ From the beginning it was not so : ’ to call it the first institution ; for that is it that giveth the best judgment, and the last. The first end is the true end.—That was it, that Adam, having in the six days a natural use in his body of the creatures, should, for the glory of God, on the seventh day have a spiritual use and consideration. So that this remedy against distraction is the first, and principal, and general end ; though other ends were after added.”\*

#### ARCHBISHOP USSHER.

“ For mine own part, I never yet doubted, but took it for granted, that as the setting of some whole day apart for God’s solemn worship was *juris Divini naturalis*, so that this solemn day should be one in seven was *juris Divini positivi* recorded in the fourth commandment. And such a *jus Divinum positivum* here I mean as baptism and the Lord’s Supper are established by : which lieth not in the power of any man or angel to change or alter : wherein methinks your second position is a little too waterish ; viz., ‘ That this doctrine,

\* Andrewes’s “ Moral Law Expounded,” pp. 328, 329. Edition of 1642.

rather than the contrary, is to be held the doctrine of the Church of England; and may well be gathered out of her public Liturgy, and the first part of the Homily concerning the place and time of prayer.' Whereas you should have said that this is to be held undoubtedly the doctrine of the Church of England. For, if there could be any reasonable doubt made of the meaning of the Church of England in her Liturgy, who should better declare her meaning than herself in her Homily, where she peremptorily declareth her mind? " \*

"The special day of the week which God hath set apart for His solemn worship is the first day of the week, called the Lord's day. This day was not set apart thereunto from the beginning; for, from the first creation till the resurrection of Christ, the last day of the week, commonly called Saturday, was the day that was appointed thereunto, and that which the people of God constantly observed; because upon that day God ceased from the work of creation. This day, however, came to be changed by Divine authority, as appeareth, 1. By the practice of our Saviour Christ and His apostles, which should be a sufficient rule unto us; especially the apostles having added a commandment thereunto. (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) 2. There is no reason why it should be called the Lord's day, but in regard of the special dedication thereof to the Lord's service; for otherwise all the days of the week are the Lord's days, and He is to be served and worshipped in them. The cause why the day was changed was that it might serve for a thankful memorial of Christ's resurrection. For as God rested from His labour on the last day of the week, so Christ ceased from His labour and afflictions on this day. As

\* Ussher's Works, vol. xii., p. 589. Octavo edition.

the one, therefore, was specially sanctified in regard of the creation of the world, so was the other in respect of the restoration and redemption of the world; which is a greater work than the creation; and no power of any creature in heaven or earth can alter it, or place another seventh day in the place and stead thereof." \*

## BISHOP PEARSON.

"This day, thus consecrated by the resurrection of Christ, was left as the perpetual badge and cognizance of His church. As God spake by Moses to the Israelites, 'Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you;' (Exod. xxxi. 13;) thereby leaving a mark of distinction upon the Jews, who were by this means known to worship that God whose name was Jehovah, who made the world, and delivered them from the hands of Pharaoh: so we must conceive that He hath given us this day as a sign between Him and us for ever, whereby we may be known to worship the same God Jehovah, who did not only create heaven and earth in the beginning, but also raised His eternal Son from the dead for our redemption." †

## DR. KENNICOTT.

"Let us not, then, confine the mercy of God, or disown His goodness as not extended to all His creatures.

\* Ussher's "Body of Divinity," by Robinson, pp. 296, 297. Edition of 1841.

† Pearson on the Creed, Article V.

The sacred historian has expressly assured us that, at the finishing of the creation, God commanded the observation of a Sabbath in remembrance of the Creator and His works; and certainly such command must extend, and must have extended, to all mankind, because they all are creatures. It is, indeed, asserted by some, that the text in Gen. ii. 2, 3, commanding a Sabbath, is a prolepsis, and mentioned there only by way of anticipation of the Jewish Sabbath, instituted about two thousand five hundred years after. But the uniformity of the history, and the regularity of the narration, are sufficient to set aside so forced an interpretation.\*

“In the first chapter of Genesis, having described the creation of the world in six days, the second chapter begins with acquainting us that God, having ceased from all His works, ‘blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it;’ that is, (for the original word can signify nothing else,) commanded it to be kept holy. This command, thus given at the beginning of the world, at the conclusion of God’s work of the creation, must it not oblige all men that are created? Must it not oblige all nations to whom it is made known? For the reason is universal. God finished His work in six days, and commanded the seventh to be kept holy by His creatures. And as all the rational creatures of God here on earth are bound to thank Him for their creation, and to set apart some portion of their time in order to praise Him, pray unto Him, and learn to please Him, by knowing and executing His commands; so all mankind are bound to observe a Sabbath day.”†

\* Kennicott’s “Two Dissertations,” p. 135. Edition of 1747.

† The Sabbath: a Sermon, by Benjamin Kennicott, D.D. P. 14. Edition of 1781.



“Sacred for ever be the day on which, in a great measure, depends the religion, and, consequently, the happiness, of all the inhabitants of this world,—of all those who, having been favoured with the knowledge, are bound by the commands, of Divine revelation!” \*

#### BISHOP HORSLEY.

“To the general question, What regard is due to the institution of a Sabbath under the Christian dispensation? the answer is plainly this: Neither more nor less than was due to it in the patriarchal ages, before the Mosaic covenant took place. It is a gross mistake to consider the Sabbath as a mere festival of the Jewish church, deriving its whole sanctity from the Levitical law. The contrary appears, as well from the evidence of the fact, which the sacred history affords, as from the reason of the thing, which the same history declares. The religious observation of the seventh day hath a place in the Decalogue, among the very first duties of natural religion. The reason assigned for the injunction is general, and hath no relation or regard to the particular circumstances of the Israelites, or to the particular relation in which they stood to God as His chosen people. The creation of the world was an event equally interesting to the whole human race; and the acknowledgment of God as our Creator is a duty, in all ages and in all countries, equally incumbent upon every individual of mankind. The terms in which the reason of the ordinance is assigned plainly describe it as an

\* The Sabbath: a Sermon, by Benjamin Kennicott, D.D. Dedication.

institution of an earlier age: 'Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath, and *set it apart*.' (Exod. xx. 11.) (That is the true import of the word, 'hallowed it.') These words, you will observe, express a past time. It is not said, 'Therefore the Lord *now* blesses the seventh day, and sets it apart,' but, 'Therefore He *did* bless it, and set it apart,' in time past; and He now requires that you, His chosen people, should be observant of that ancient institution. And in farther confirmation of the fact, we find, by the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, that the Israelites were acquainted with the Sabbath, and had been accustomed to some observance of it, before Moses received the tables of the law at Sinai. The use of the Sabbath, as it began, will end only with the world itself." \*

#### DEAN GRAVES.

" 'Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.' It requires no laboured argument to prove the high and universal obligation of this sacred precept. To the Jews it was enjoined, not merely as a part of their ceremonial law,—which was only designed for a temporary purpose, even to prepare for the introduction of the perfect law of the Gospel,—but as a part of that moral law, which was to bind all mankind in every period and climate of the world. It was communicated to them, not by the intervention of their legislator, but directly from the Divine Presence itself, when the Lord spoke unto all the assembled nation from the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick

\* Horsley's Sermons, vol. i., pp. 337, 338, 344. Edition of 1829.

darkness, with a great voice ; and afterwards on the same tables which contained the rest of the Ten Commandments, it was engraven by the finger of God. It assigns, as the reason on which the Divine Wisdom founded the institution, an event in which the *entire* human race are *equally* interested, even the creation of this world, and of man, to whose dominion the world was submitted, because he alone of all inhabitants was capable of contemplating the perfections and glorifying the majesty of his God. It was designed to preserve a lively and grateful remembrance of their Creator amongst the children of men ; and it scarcely admits of a doubt, but that, from the beginning of the world to the manifestation of the Divine presence on Mount Sinai, the observance of the Sabbath was enforced on all the faithful followers of the great Jehovah.” \*

\* Graves's Works, vol. iv., p. 203. Edition of 1840.

## V.—THE APOSTOLIC OFFICE.

IN our examination of the institutions of Christianity, we pass from the consideration of the Sabbath to the MINISTRY which Christ appointed for the purpose of accomplishing His merciful designs in the salvation of men. He has redeemed the world by His death; He has revealed the system of evangelical truth, by which mankind are to be enlightened and saved; He has instituted the sacraments, as symbols of His truth, and pledges of His faithfulness and love; and He has sent down the Holy Spirit, to apply that truth, and to sanctify the souls of believers. But the truth must be faithfully preached; the sacraments must be administered; the people who receive the truth must be united together in holy fellowship; and those who are thus gathered out of the world must be watched over in love, so that the truly devout may be encouraged, the lukewarm and negligent warned and reproved, and scandalous offenders excommunicated, as a warning to others, and as a means of preserving unimpaired the influence and honour of the Christian name. All this is in accordance with the mind of the Lord, who is pleased to employ human instrumentality in His service. The men to whom this work is assigned are the ministers of Christ, who act in His name, and under His sanction.

The ministers of Christ may be comprehended under two general divisions,—ordinary, and extraordinary; and as we proceed in our inquiry, we shall find that both these orders must be divided into various classes, if we would thoroughly understand the subject, as it is placed before us in the Holy Scriptures. At the head of the extraordinary ministers of Christ we must rank the apostles, to whom we will at present confine our attention, reserving the case of other ministers for future consideration. I know not that we can exhibit the subject of the apostolic office with greater advantage than by embodying the various particulars which it comprehends in a series of distinct propositions.

I. That all the apostles were chosen and appointed directly and specially by the Lord Jesus.

He is the Head of the Church; to Him all power is committed; the Christian ministry, in all its departments, is His own ordinance; and hence it is His prerogative to employ whom He pleases in the sacred service. In ordinary cases of evangelical ministration, the Divine and inward call to the work is accompanied by an official call from the church, acting through its ministers, and concurring with them. But the call and appointment of the apostles were very different. No human authority or interference was here concerned. The whole matter was determined by the sovereign will of the Son of God, who is spoken of as acting with special solemnity and deliberation. “And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles; Simon, (whom He also named Peter,) and



Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor." (Luke vi. 12-16.)

The fact which is here stated is worthy of special attention. It was after a whole night spent in prayer to His heavenly Father, that the Lord Jesus, out of the mass of His disciples, appointed twelve men to the apostolic office. St. Mark, when relating the same transaction, says that Jesus called to Him "whom He would. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." (Mark iii. 13-15.) To these men our Lord applied a new and appropriate title. He called them apostles: a term which strikingly expresses their peculiar office, as persons who were to be SENT FORTH by Him on a special mission. They were not to go through the various nations of the earth of their own accord, but at His bidding. They were not to engage in projects of their own devising, but to accomplish a work which He assigned them, and with which His glory was essentially connected. Addressing them, He said, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." (John xv. 16.) "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." (John xx. 21.)

That it was the exclusive prerogative of Christ to appoint men to the apostolic office, was, indeed, acknowledged by the eleven in the prayer which they offered to

Him with respect to Judas's successor. Having nominated Justus and Matthias, "they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two THOU HAST CHOSEN, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell." (Acts i. 24, 25.)

At a subsequent period St. Paul was called to the apostolic office, but without any interposition of human counsel or authority. Hence his solemn declaration, when addressing the Galatian churches, several members of which had been led to question the justice of his claims as an apostle of Christ. "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." He adds, "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. i. 1, 11, 12.)

We perceive, therefore, a marked difference between the manner in which the apostles were appointed to their office, and the manner in which ordinary ministers are appointed to theirs. In the selection and appointment of an apostle, the will and authority of Christ are solely concerned. The church interposes no authority in the case, as it does in respect of its ordinary teachers and pastors. Nor is the church, in any form or degree, called upon even to concur in this appointment.

II. That, as the apostles were to be the witnesses of Christ, it was requisite that they should have seen Him.

This fact is mentioned in connexion with their original appointment. "He ordained twelve, that they

should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach." (Mark iii. 14.) To a great extent their ministry was to be a solemn and official testimony to the doctrine of Christ, which they had heard Him utter; to the miracles of Christ, which they had seen Him perform; to His benevolent and spotless example, which had been presented to their view; and to the fact of His resurrection, of which they had also the indubitable evidence of their own senses. Having attended Him through the time of His public ministry, He therefore said to them, at the close of His life, "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." (John xv. 27.) After His resurrection He addressed them to the same effect: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.)

In the nomination of a successor to Judas this view of the apostolic character was distinctly recognised: "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection." (Acts i. 21, 22.) Hence it is clear the eleven deemed it improper to propose any man as a candidate for the apostolic office, unless he had seen Jesus, and could therefore, from his own personal knowledge, bear witness concerning Him.

With this view of the apostolic office the history of the apostles' ministry is in perfect agreement. Thus they express themselves in the fulfilment of their high commission: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof

we all are witnesses." (Acts ii. 32.) "Whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses." (Acts iii. 15.) "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." (Acts iv. 33.)

One principal cause of the success which attended the preaching of the apostles was the unexceptionable character of their testimony concerning Christ. They had long been with Him, and were therefore perfectly acquainted with His person, doctrine, and life. On the subject of His resurrection they were at first incredulous, and would not be satisfied without the most convincing evidence. He therefore "showed unto them His hands and His side," (John xx. 20,) presenting the wounds of His crucifixion. Hence the remarkable statement of St. John: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life;.....that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." (1 John i. 1-3.)

Although St. Paul was not converted, and called to the apostolic office, till about two years after our Saviour's crucifixion and ascension to glory, yet his ministry also was exercised, like that of his brethren, in the form of a testimony concerning Christ. When he was convinced of sin, and in a penitent state at Damascus, he was apprised by Ananias that he should see Christ, and be one of His chosen witnesses in the world. Addressing the future apostle, Ananias said, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth. For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast

seen and heard." (Acts xxii. 14, 15.) The apostle himself adds, "When I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me." (Verses 17, 18.) Cherishing a strong attachment to his countrymen, St. Paul was inclined to remonstrate, thinking that he could subdue their prejudices and unbelief, when the Lord Jesus, interposing His supreme authority, said, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." (Verse 21.) The apostle refers to the same subject in his address to King Agrippa. "As I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." (Acts xxvi. 12-16.)

Upon the fact that he had seen the Lord Jesus, St. Paul lays the utmost stress, speaking of it as essential to his apostleship. Some members of the Corinthian church doubted whether he really had an apostolical commission; and to them he said, "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ



our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this." (1 Cor. ix. 1-3.) It is here conceded that a sight of Christ was a necessary qualification for the apostolic office. That he possessed this qualification St. Paul explicitly asserts; at the same time connecting it with the undeniable fact, that, as an apostle, he had laboured under the Divine sanction, which was manifest from the nature and extent of his success. He refers to this subject in a subsequent part of the same Epistle, where he says, having mentioned the persons to whom Christ appeared after His resurrection, "And last of all, He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." (1 Cor. xv. 8.) Although St. Paul had not been one of our Saviour's stated attendants, while He exercised His ministry upon the earth, he had seen the Lord, and heard His voice, after His resurrection, and was therefore a competent witness of that great event, which is the crowning evidence of His Messiahship, and of the truth of the Gospel.

III. That the apostles were endued with the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and with the power of working miracles.

The following promises relate to the inspiration of which we speak: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John xiv. 26.) "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear,

that shall He speak : and He will show you things to come." (John xvi. 13.) These comprehensive promises were fulfilled to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, when they "were all filled with the Holy Ghost ;" and the inspiration under which they were then brought remained with them till the close of life.

The apostles were Jews, and, as such, were trained up in the knowledge and belief of the great principles of Divine truth, as they are revealed in the Old Testament. They were accustomed to hear the Holy Scriptures read in their synagogues ; and they were doubtless themselves accustomed to read attentively those lively oracles of God. In addition to these advantages, they had, for three years, attended the Lord Jesus in His journeyings, listening to His public discourses and private instructions. The knowledge of revealed truth which they thus acquired, accompanied by the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit, was sufficient in order to their own personal salvation. But they were to be the instruments of introducing a new dispensation of religion, which should far surpass all that mankind had ever known or even imagined. They were to make a full revelation of truths, which had hitherto been only partially revealed, and to disclose to the world the entire plan and method of human salvation. The doctrines which they were to set forth were to be the true standard of appeal on all questions relating to the salvation and duty of mankind, to the end of the world. Hence their need of a plenary inspiration, that they might rightly apprehend the true import and design of the revelations which God had previously made ; that they might have a correct remembrance of all that Christ had taught and done, and thoroughly

understand His whole doctrine; and that they might know the exact nature of those new truths which they were to propagate, and be qualified both to preach and write them without any admixture of error or mistake. For all these purposes the Holy Ghost was given unto them, leading them into all the truth: and hence there was a perfect consistency in their teaching; no one contradicted another; and no one had any occasion to instruct his brother. New as were several of the doctrines which they were sent to promulgate, these inspired men all said the same thing, without any mutual consultation; for it was the Spirit of God that spoke in them, the Spirit of truth and wisdom. When they preached, the voice which the people heard was human, but the matter was Divine. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." (1 Cor. ii. 13.) "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) "But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. i. 11, 12.) "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 15.) "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." (2 Peter iii. 2.) "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Matt. x. 20.)

While the apostles all spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, it was requisite that their ministry

should be sanctioned by miracles, as the acknowledged credentials of a Divine commission. The ministry of Moses, and that of our blessed Saviour, were both confirmed by miracles; and so was that of the apostles. The communication to them of the Holy Spirit, qualifying them for their apostolic work, was attended by the signal miracle of the gift of tongues, so that Galilæan fishermen, without any previous study, in one day,—in one hour,—were enabled to preach the Gospel of salvation in languages and dialects which were understood by “Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians.” (Acts ii. 9–11.) This miracle filled all these people with amazement; and well it might; so that they “said one to another, What meaneth this?” The meaning was, that through the medium of these plain and unlettered men God was speaking to mankind on subjects of everlasting importance.

This miracle was soon followed by the cure of the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple; (Acts iii. 1–11;) then by the death of Ananias and Sapphira, who, in their vile attempt to practise a fraud upon the apostles, “lied unto the Holy Ghost,” who dwelt in these servants of Christ. (Acts v. 1–10.) Then we read that “they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they

were healed every one." (Acts v. 15, 16.) Miracles of the same kind were wrought in various other places, in connexion with the apostolic ministry; so that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the Gospel of salvation, which was first spoken by the Lord, and was afterwards confirmed by them that heard Him, says, "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will." (Heb. ii. 4.) We read also, that "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." (Acts xix. 11, 12.)

Miracles were not indeed confined to the apostles; for there was a plentiful effusion of miraculous gifts and endowments in the first period of the Christian church; but all the apostles were possessed of these supernatural powers. Of these blessed men it is therefore said, that "they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark xvi. 20.)

IV. That the commission of the apostles was universal, and their powers were limited only by the will of Christ, whose servants they were.

Preaching the Gospel, and the administration of baptism, constituted the leading duties of their office; and in the discharge of these duties they were not to confine themselves to particular churches, and districts of country, but to regard all nations as their field of labour. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." (Mark xvi. 15.) "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of



the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii. 19.) These were the comprehensive terms in which their commission was expressed. Ordinary ministers in general were then, as they are now, confined to particular localities, being entrusted with the pastoral charge of their several churches: but "the world was the parish" of the apostles; and the amount of their actual labour, judging from the records which have been preserved, gives us the highest conception of their diligence, self-denial, fidelity, and zeal.

"The holy apostles and disciples of our Saviour, being scattered over the whole world, Thomas, according to tradition, received Parthia as his allotted region; Andrew received Scythia, and John Asia; where, after continuing for some time, he died at Ephesus. Peter appears to have preached through Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia, to the Jews that were scattered abroad; who also, finally coming to Rome, was crucified with his head downward, having requested of himself to suffer in this way. Why should we speak of Paul, spreading the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and finally suffering martyrdom at Rome, under Nero?"\*

When the apostles had planted churches, and appointed ministers to watch over them, they still retained an official connexion with the people who had thus been united together in holy fellowship. "The care of all the churches" devolved upon them; so that when erroneous doctrine or corrupt practice was tolerated in any church, the apostles interposed to correct the evil. If the offenders were obstinate, or incorrigible, the apostles assumed a tone of authority, insisting upon

\* Eusebius's "Ecclesiastical History," book iii., chap. i.

the excommunication of the men whose tenets and conduct were injurious to the Christian name. A remarkable example of this kind we have in respect of the Corinthian church, the sinful irregularities of which St. Paul, when absent, reproved with great severity, charging the people to put away from among themselves the "wicked person" who was guilty of incest, (1 Cor. v. 13,) and to reform the abuses which prevailed among them with respect to the supper of the Lord; intimating that if they should refuse to comply with his admonitions, he would visit them in person, and inflict the punishment which the several delinquents had merited. "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power...What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" (1 Cor. iv. 18-21.) "I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth." (2 Cor. i. 23.) "I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare: since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me." (2 Cor. xiii. 2, 3.) "I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction." (2 Cor. xiii. 10.)

St. Paul makes other references to the apostolical power which the Lord had conferred upon him. "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck:

of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander ; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." (1 Tim. i. 19, 20.) St. John utters a similar threat respecting Diotrophes. "I wrote unto the church : but Diotrophes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words." (3 John 9, 10.)

In no part of their work were the apostles subject to human control. In preaching, in admitting people into the church by baptism, in the infliction of censures, in excommunications, in the correction of error, and in the maintenance of ecclesiastical discipline and order, they acted solely under the direction of the Lord Jesus, by whom they were sent, and to whom alone they were amenable. Theirs was, in the fullest sense of the expression, an inspired and Divinely-authorized ministry. Their preaching, plain and simple as it was in its mode and form, was an authoritative declaration of the terms upon which God will show mercy to a lost world. When they rebuked the disorderly professors of Christ's religion, and expelled bad men from the church, they acted no less in the name of the Lord ; and all their official acts received His sanction. This is clearly implied in our Saviour's words addressed to them after His resurrection. "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you : as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John xx. 21-23.)

In the language of Holy Scripture men are often

said to do things which in the name and by the authority of God they declare shall be done. Thus Joseph in Egypt foretold the doom of his fellow-prisoners, Pharaoh's butler and baker; and in relating the fact, the butler afterwards said, "Me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged:" (Gen. xli. 13 :) that is, He declared that I should be restored to my office, and the baker should be hanged; for Joseph, who was then himself a helpless prisoner, had no power to dispose of these men. The patriarch Isaac, also, having predicted the future condition of his two sons, and the condition of their posterity, said to Esau respecting Jacob, "I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?" (Gen. xxvii. 37;) simply meaning, I have foretold these things in the name of God, and He will certainly bring them to pass. They were not the acts of Isaac, who was asleep in his grave when the events occurred. A remarkable example of the same form of expression we have in the appointment of Jeremiah to the prophetic office. "See," said God, "I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." (Jer. i. 10.) Jeremiah was, in himself, a feeble, sorrowful, and persecuted man, without power to control the various nations of the earth. The meaning simply is, that he was appointed to announce, in the name of God, the future destiny of the Jews, and of the surrounding kingdoms. In like manner, when it was said to the apostles, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," it was

not meant that the apostles themselves were invested with the formidable power of forgiving and retaining the sins of individual men, so as to adjudge them to endless happiness or endless misery; but that they were appointed officially to declare the terms upon which God will forgive sins, and the certain misery of all that refuse compliance with His will. They were also authorized to admit penitent believers into the church, and to exclude from it incorrigible offenders. What they did in both these respects the apostles did under the Divine sanction; and beyond these powers they never presumed to act. We may further add, that if the apostles of Christ, who were guided by the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost, never assumed authority to forgive the sins of individual men, and to bind others over to perdition, it is the highest presumption in persons calling themselves Christian priests to arrogate to themselves any such power, so as to have dominion over the consciences of their people.

V. It would appear that the number of the apostles was limited to twelve; but on this point there is a difference of opinion among learned men.

Twelve, as we have seen, was the number originally appointed, and "twelve thrones" were promised to them. (Matt. xix. 28.) But one of these was Judas Iscariot, who, having sold and betrayed his Lord, put an end to his life, and fell from his office before he had received his full qualifications; for he died before the Holy Ghost was given, and even before our Saviour rose from the dead. He was selected for the apostolic office, but forfeited his call before he had entered upon its proper duties, having neither received the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost, nor the full apostolical



commission, to "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

After the resurrection of our Lord forty days elapsed before He ascended to heaven ; and during this period He was often seen by His disciples and apostles, "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." (Acts i. 3.) Yet it does not appear that He either proposed any one as the successor of Judas, or even mentioned the subject to His followers. But during the few days that intervened between our Lord's ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, Peter stood up in the presence of the disciples, amounting to about one hundred and twenty, and proposed that one of their company should be ordained to take the office from which Judas had fallen. Two were nominated for the purpose ; prayer was then offered to Christ, that He would so interpose as to show "whether of these two He had chosen." The lot was then cast, and fell upon Matthias, who is supposed by some to have been Nathanael, whom our Lord had formerly declared to be "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile." It is added, "And he was numbered with the eleven apostles." (Acts i. 26.)

Various opinions have been advanced concerning this transaction. Some writers, of eminent learning and ability, have thought that the entire proceeding was unauthorized, and therefore null and void. They have observed that at this time even the apostles had not received that plenary inspiration which the Lord had promised, and may therefore be fairly considered as acting under the impulse of their own minds ; that in the original appointment of the apostles the Lord Jesus admitted of no human interference, but "called whom

He would ;” that when the matter of Judas’s successor was referred to the lot, and the Lord was requested to declare whether Justus or Matthias should succeed to the vacant office, His authority in the case was acknowledged, and confessed to be supreme ; but why should the disciples so far interpose as to limit His choice to two ? Many others might be equally eligible, and even more so ; for the Lord searcheth the heart, and knoweth the future as well as the past. He therefore seeth not as man seeth. If He were asked to choose in this case, why should they attempt to limit His choice, instead of leaving it perfectly free ? The men who entertain these views say, that when the lot was drawn, it must fall upon some one ; but who can say that it fell upon Matthias by the Divine appointment ? When it is said that “he was numbered with the apostles,” the meaning may simply be, that for the time the one hundred and twenty disciples regarded him as appointed to the apostolic office ; but whether the Lord Jesus endued him with apostolic qualifications, and called him to the apostolic work, who can say, in the absence of all further information concerning him ? for he is never again mentioned in Holy Scripture.

The difficulty is increased by the fact of St. Paul’s apostleship, which afterwards commenced. That he was an apostle, in the strict and proper sense of that term, called, and qualified, and sanctioned by the Son of God, is undeniable. On this subject there can be no dispute among those who believe the Bible. Now if Matthias were really constituted an apostle in the place of Judas, then St. Paul was a thirteenth apostle ; and yet there are passages of Holy Scripture which appear very decisively to limit the number to twelve. The Lord

chose twelve in the first instance ; and that He did not intend to increase the number appears manifest from this consideration, that He speaks of them as twelve when describing the honours that awaited them in a future state. “Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matt. xix. 28.) This promise, as it would appear from the parallel text in Luke, relates to the reward which the apostles of Christ, as the principal agents in the establishment of His kingdom, shall enjoy with Him in the spiritual and eternal world. “I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me ; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Hence it appears that the apostolic thrones are limited to twelve, which was the original number of the apostles, and intended to correspond with the number of Israel’s tribes. The question then arises, Is Matthias or St. Paul to occupy the throne which was vacated by the apostasy of Judas ?

There is another text which bears directly upon the subject of our present inquiry. “And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” (Rev. xxi. 14.) By the city which is here mentioned we are unquestionably to understand the Christian church. The names of the twelve apostles are said to be inscribed upon its foundations, because the church was formed, in the first instance, by apostolic labour, and under apostolic direction. Yet still we find the number of the

apostles limited to twelve, in an inspired book which was written many years after St. Paul had been called to the apostolic office, and was in apostolic "labours more abundant."

On this question, then, let every reader form his own judgment. We are not aware that any important consequence depends upon its solution, either in respect of morals or of doctrine; and yet it is not unworthy of attention. If it was the purpose of the Lord absolutely to confine the number of the apostles to twelve, St. Paul was unquestionably the successor of Judas; but if this was not His purpose, then the high honour of the apostolate was doubtless conferred upon Matthias, as well as upon St. Paul and "the eleven."

VI. That, with respect to their qualifications and authority, the apostles were equal; so that no one of them had dominion over the rest.

On this point we are at issue with the Church of Rome, which claims for St. Peter the precedence over all his brethren. But this claim can never be substantiated upon Scriptural principles. Our blessed Lord, who created the apostolic office, resisted, with every indication of His displeasure, all attempts on the part of these His servants to acquire superiority over one another. "And being in the house, He asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest. And He sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." (Mark ix. 33-35.) "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the

greatest. And He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." (Luke xxii. 24-26.) In this decisive manner did the Son of God discountenance every thought and desire of superiority and dominion over one another in His apostolic servants. One was their Master, and all they were brethren.

Plenary inspiration, and the power of working miracles, were common to all the apostles; nor is there the slightest intimation in the New Testament, that St. Peter either claimed any dominion over his brethren, or that they acknowledged him as possessing such dominion. When this apostle dissembled at Antioch, St. Paul "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed;" (Gal. ii. 11;) and when St. Paul's apostleship was called in question, he said, to the honour of his Lord, and for the purpose of magnifying the office which he sustained, "I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles;" (2 Cor. xi. 5;) "In nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing." (2 Cor. xii. 11.)

The supposition that St. Peter was placed at the head of the apostles, and that they were all subordinate to him, is a mere fiction, not only unsupported by Scripture proof, but directly opposed to the clearest evidence. If he had the honour of preaching the first sermon on the day of Pentecost, and of thus opening the evangelical dispensation, they concurred with him, and took part in the services of that memorable day; and if he was first employed in carrying the Gospel to



the heathen, in the person and family of Cornelius, this was a mere circumstance, which proves no superiority over the rest of the apostles, many of whom carried the truth into regions which St. Peter never visited. St. Paul, for instance, preached the Gospel where Christ had not before been named, lest he should build upon another man's foundation. (Rom. xv. 20.) If St. Peter had the power of binding and loosing, so had his brethren; if he had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, so had they; and multitudes were admitted into that kingdom by their instrumentality. But even if it could be proved that St. Peter had the supremacy over his apostolical brethren, it would not thence follow that the Bishop of Rome has succeeded him in this high prerogative, and is therefore the head of the whole Christian church in the world. If he be St. Peter's successor, in this or any other respect, let him produce his apostolic credentials. He will otherwise place himself in the unenviable predicament of the men of whom our Saviour thus speaks in His address to the church at Ephesus: "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." (Rev. ii. 2.) The Papal throne is a mere human device, directly opposed to the spirit of the Gospel, and opposed to the very letter of the New Testament. The character of the men who successively occupy this throne is plainly depicted in the Scriptures of truth: They are usurpers, "whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming." (2 Thess. ii. 8.)\*

\* For a thorough and decisive refutation of the Papal claims, the reader is referred to the treatise of Barrow on the alleged Supremacy of the Pope.

VII. The title of apostle is sometimes in Scripture given, in an accommodated sense, to men who were not of the number of the twelve, and who, we have reason to believe, were not possessed of apostolic endowments.

Barnabas is called an apostle, in this popular and accommodated sense, as being not only an itinerant minister of the Gospel, the companion and fellow-labourer of St. Paul, but as being also sent forth under the Divine direction. To the prophets and teachers at Antioch "the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they SENT THEM AWAY. So they, being SENT FORTH by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia." (Acts xiii. 2-4.) When these servants of Christ were at Lystra, the heathen people, mistaking their character, prepared to offer sacrifice to them; "which when the APOSTLES Barnabas and Paul heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things?" (Acts xiv. 14, 15.)

The title of apostles is applied to other subordinate ministers, probably St. Luke and Apollos. (2 Cor. viii. 23.) St. Paul sent Titus to Corinth, and with him one or more brethren, whose names he does not mention, but who are supposed to have been Luke and Apollos, that they might collect pecuniary contributions for the relief of the suffering Christians in Judæa. One of these brethren St. Paul describes as a man "whose praise was in all the churches," and who, he says, was "chosen of the churches to travel with us with this gift." He then adds, "Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you: or our

brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches," *ἀπόστολοι*, "the APOSTLES of the churches, and the glory of Christ." (2 Cor. viii. 19, 23.)

The word is used in the same sense (Phil. ii. 25) in reference to another subordinate minister. "I supposed it necessary to send you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger," *ἀπόστολον*, "your apostle, and he that ministered to my wants." This Epistle was written when St. Paul was imprisoned at Rome. The Philippian Christians sent him relief by the hands of Epaphroditus, who is therefore called their apostle, or messenger, just as Luke and Apollos are denominated the messengers or apostles of other churches, being sent forth as the bearers of those churches' bounty, or salutations. They were the apostles or messengers of the churches, as the twelve were the apostles or messengers of Christ; and from Christ's apostles, in the strict and proper sense, they are thus clearly distinguished.

We may also observe, that our blessed Lord is called "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession;" (Heb. iii. 1;) because He was sent by God to bear witness unto the truth, and to redeem the world by His death upon the cross.

The conclusion, then, to which we are conducted is, that the apostolic office, properly so called, was distinct and peculiar. The men who sustained this office had no predecessors, and no one succeeded them in it, so as to possess their qualifications and authority. They were appointed to lay the foundations of the Christian church, and to give the world the system of evangelical truth, by which mankind are to be saved, and according to which they will be judged in the last day. To qualify

them for this great work, the greatest ever allotted to men, they were all inspired, as a proof of which they were possessed of miraculous powers. No other men could justly claim these high and sacred prerogatives.

As there were "false prophets" under the Jewish economy, (2 Peter ii. 1,) so, after our Saviour, "false Christs" made their appearance, practising their arts of deception. (Matt. xxiv. 24.) At the same time "false apostles" presented their claims to public confidence, and attempted to pervert the minds of Christian people. The church at Ephesus examined and then rejected their pretensions, and, as we have seen, thus gained the approval of their Lord, whose truth these base men had endeavoured to corrupt, for selfish purposes, as the Romish prelates have done in times less remote.

While we maintain that the apostolic office ceased when "the twelve" closed their labours upon earth, it is important to observe, that the principal work which was assigned to the apostles did not then end, but must be perpetuated till time shall be no more. The apostles were sent to preach the Gospel, to administer baptism, to plant and organize churches, to repress error, to defend the truth, and to see that a godly discipline was maintained among those who bore the Christian name. These are objects which concern the honour of Christ, and the best interests of mankind, in every age. And the Gospel must not only be preached in places where Christ is known, but in heathen lands, to "every creature," however ignorant and barbarous. This work must be carried on by missionaries, duly qualified, who must be sent forth and sustained by the churches; and the noble-minded men who undertake this arduous service, constrained by the love of Christ, may be justly regarded

as the highest class of ordinary ministers ; inasmuch as they bear the nearest resemblance to the apostles of Christ : yet they are not apostles, properly speaking ; for they possess not an inspired knowledge of the Gospel, nor the gift of tongues, nor the power of working miracles.

That other men, missionaries and ordinary pastors, would to some extent enter into the labours of the apostles, when they should be no more, our Saviour intimated when He gave them their commission ; for, having directed them to “teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ;” teaching those whom they should succeed in converting, “to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded ;” He added the declaration, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) The work of preaching, of baptizing, and of conveying practical instruction, is therefore to be perpetuated “to the end of the world,” and that under the direct sanction of Christ. This work, which was originally assigned to the apostles, is now to be carried on by ordinary ministers, with the concurrence and aid of the entire body of Christian people.

That the honour of having succeeded to the apostolic office should ever have been claimed for modern prelates is a surprising fact. They are not called directly by Christ, as the apostles were, but, in this country especially, are nominated by ministers of state, and often on grounds simply political. They have not seen Christ, as the apostles had. They are destitute of apostolical qualifications, such as the gift of inspiration, and of tongues, the power of working miracles ; and their employment is only apostolical to a very limited extent.



They ordain elders, but not over churches which they have themselves planted, as the apostles did, by preaching the Gospel in regions where Christ was not previously named, and often at the hazard of their lives. They exercise jurisdiction in the church, but mostly by means of courts in which laymen preside, and by civil penalties; whereas the authority by which the apostles were armed was purely spiritual.

## VI.—THE CHRISTIAN PROPHETS.

IN speaking of the extraordinary ministers whom the Lord Jesus raised up and employed in the first planting of Christianity, next to the apostles we must place those persons to whom the name of *PROPHETS* is applied; for this is the order assigned to them in the writings of St. Paul. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers," &c. (1 Cor. xii. 28.) "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." (Eph. iv. 11.) It is observable in both these texts, that prophets are placed immediately after the apostles, and before any other class of ministers in the Christian church. The same order is elsewhere observed. St. Paul, for example, tells the believing Ephesians that they were "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. ii. 20.) As he is here speaking of the foundation of the Christian church, we understand him to mean the Christian prophets, as well as the Christian apostles; for both, as we shall soon perceive, were inspired teachers of the Christian religion.

With respect to the true nature of the prophetic office, we are in danger of being misled by popular opinion and phraseology. People in general conceive of

a prophet as one whose principal qualification and work consist in foretelling coming events. But this is a great mistake. The ancient prophets who were raised up in the patriarchal times, and in the Jewish church, did indeed declare things to come; and the exact fulfilment of their prophecies is one of the grand proofs of Divine inspiration: but to reveal the future was not their chief employment, much less was it their only calling. The writings of the Jewish prophets contain many predictions, but they consist mainly of declarations of duty, and exhortations to the practice of it; of warnings and threatenings addressed to sinners, and earnest calls to repentance; of promises of pardon to the penitent, and of prosperity and happiness to the upright and obedient. The writings of the prophets also abound with prayers to God for the blessings of His goodness, with deprecations of His wrath, with devout acknowledgments of His greatness and mercy, and with expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving. The peculiarity of their character was, that they uttered these things, not of their own accord, nor from the mere impulse of pious and benevolent feeling, but under the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

We have a striking illustration of this subject in the early history of Saul, the first King of Israel, who is described as "a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." (1 Sam. ix. 2.) When Samuel had anointed this young man of princely mien and stature to the kingly office, he directed him to go "to the hill of God," where he was told that he would "meet a company of prophets coming down from the

high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them." Samuel added, "They shall prophesy: and THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD WILL COME UPON THEE, and thou shalt PROPHECY with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee: for GOD IS WITH thee." "And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD CAME UPON HIM, AND HE PROPHESED among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, HE PROPHESED among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets? And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place." (1 Sam. x. 5-7, 9-13.)

There is no reason for believing that Saul upon this occasion uttered any prediction, in the strict sense of that term. The meaning rather is, that, under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, he gave utterance to important truth, with deep emotion, and probably at the same time worshipped God with special earnestness and zeal; just as the seventy elders did in the days of Moses, when the Spirit came upon them, qualifying them for the duty of governing the people. "And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when THE

SPIRIT rested upon them, THEY PROPHESED, and did not cease. But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad : and THE SPIRIT rested upon them ;..... and THEY PROPHESED in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake ? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put HIS SPIRIT upon them." (Num. xi. 25-29.)

What particular sentiments and expressions these elders uttered, when the Holy Spirit was upon them, we are not informed, any more than we are told what Saul said when he prophesied in the company of God's prophets. In both cases, however, we learn that they "spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance ;" for the act of prophesying is expressly mentioned as an effect of the presence and agency of the Holy Ghost.

Of this kind of prophesying, or speaking for the time under the constraining power of the Holy Spirit, we have four remarkable examples in the first and second chapters of St. Luke's Gospel. We refer, of course, to the case of Elizabeth, of the Virgin Mary, of Zacharias, and of Simeon. When Elizabeth and Mary met, one of them expecting soon to be the mother of our blessed Lord, and the other to give birth to His forerunner, they both for a time fell into a prophetic rapture, and gave utterance to thoughts which only the Holy Spirit could dictate, and to feelings which He only could inspire. "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost : and she spake out with a loud voice, and said" to Mary, "Blessed art thou



among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" "And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," &c. (Luke i. 41-55.)

In like manner, when John the Baptist was circumcised, it is said "his father Zacharias was FILLED with the HOLY GHOST, and PROPHESED, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began," &c. (Luke i. 67-79.) In this inspired prophecy of Zacharias, as in that of the Virgin Mary, we find thanksgiving rendered to God, and much important truth enunciated relating to Christ as a Saviour, and to the benefits that mankind would derive from His manifestation in the flesh.

A similar example we have in the case of the venerable Simeon, of whom it is said that "the Holy Ghost was upon him;" "it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ;" and that "he came by the Spirit into the temple," "when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law." Taking the infant Saviour into his arms, the holy man prophesied, saying, among other things which the Holy Spirit unquestionably dictated to his mind, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light

to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." (Luke ii. 25-35.) In this case also, as in the case of Elizabeth, Mary, and Zachariah, the utterance of truth was connected with an act of Divine worship; for Simeon "blessed God" for the gift which his eyes saw, and his arms embraced.

With these examples before us, we are prepared to examine the cases of prophesying which occurred in the Christian church, and to which many references are made in the apostolical Epistles. It was, indeed, declared beforehand that the evangelical dispensation should be distinguished by a copious effusion of Divine influence, and a rich communication of spiritual gifts. On the day of Pentecost, therefore, when the people marvelled to hear Galilæan fishermen speak of the things of God in many foreign languages and dialects, St. Peter, "standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said unto them," "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy." (Acts ii. 14-18.)

From the beginning of the world God had been pleased to reveal His truth to men by dreams and visions, and by the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost; but the persons who were thus favoured, as the instruments of making known the mind of God to others, were few in number, and the revelations which they received were comparatively scanty and obscure; and even the most eminent of the ancient prophets did

not fully understand the import of their own predictions. In beautiful contrast to this state of things, it is therefore said, that, "in the last days," by which is meant the evangelical dispensation, all these methods of Divine revelation would be employed; and that the servants of God in great numbers, including "young men," and "old men," and even "handmaidens," should receive not only sanctifying grace, but extraordinary revelations, which they should freely communicate for the general benefit of the church and of the world. "On My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy:" that is, judging from the cases to which we have just adverted, they shall communicate truth, and engage in the worship of God, under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. The truth which they shall utter shall not be the result of their own personal study, as is the case in the ordinary ministry of the Gospel, but suggested to their minds at the time by the Spirit of God; it shall be spoken, therefore, with peculiar freshness, animation, and power, so as to fill the careless with alarm, to bring sinners to the Saviour, to comfort the penitent mourners, and mightily to edify the people of God. It "shall distil as the dew;" or rather, it "shall come down as rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth." Such we apprehend to be the import of the promise.

In full accordance with this view of the subject, we find distinct mention made of *PROPHETS* in many of the apostolic churches; and the probability is, that there were prophets in the whole of them, although they are not directly spoken of. We might, for instance, expect to find the church at Jerusalem, being the

mother-church, and favoured with the rich pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit, richly endued with the prophetic gift; and this, it is clear, was eminently the case. "In these days came PROPHETS from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world : which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar." (Acts xi. 27, 28.)

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain PROPHETS and teachers ; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod, and Saul." (Acts xiii. 1.)

In the church at Ephesus also there were prophets from the time of its formation. When St. Paul first visited that city, he found a few disciples there, but they were very imperfectly instructed, knowing only the baptism of John. He therefore baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus, explaining to them at the same time the true nature of Christianity ; and when he "had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them ; and they spake with tongues, and PROPHESED. And all the men were about twelve." (Acts xix. 6, 7.)

At Cæsarea, also, we find persons possessed of this gift. "We that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea : and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven ; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did PROPHESY. And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named Agabus." (Acts xxi. 8-10.)

In the church at Thessalonica there were persons who

possessed the prophetic Spirit. Hence the admonition addressed by the apostle to the whole church : “ Despise not prophesyings ;” (1 Thess. v. 20 ; ) which they could not have done, had there been no prophets among them.

The appointment of Timothy to his work, as a public teacher of Christianity, was connected with prophecies, the precise nature of which is not specified ; but they most probably related to his providential destination and future success. “ This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the PROPHECIES which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare.” (1 Tim. i. 18.) “ Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by PROPHECY, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” (1 Tim. iv. 14.)

But no church that is mentioned in the New Testament was so remarkable for spiritual endowments as the church at Corinth, the members of which are said to have been enriched by Jesus Christ in all utterance, and in all knowledge ; so that in no gift did they come behind their Christian brethren in other places. (1 Cor. i. 5, 7.) Not a few of them possessed the gift of tongues, so that they could speak in public of the things of God in languages which they had never learned by study ; and others of them were able to interpret in the popular Greek the discourses which their brethren thus delivered. St. Paul gives them directions as to the right use of these gifts, but recommends the gift of prophecy as of far greater utility and importance. He places prophecy above the gift of tongues, and charity above both ; because charity is a participation of the Divine nature, and a preparation for heaven. It will therefore survive not only every spiritual gift, but even faith and hope. Hence we per-



ceive the force and beauty of such texts as these: "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying." (1 Cor. xiv. 1-5.)

The view which we have taken of the prophets who are mentioned in connexion with the first Christian churches is confirmed by St. Chrysostom, one of the most eminent of the Greek Fathers, who flourished in the latter part of the fourth century. He thus expresses himself in the thirty-second of his Homilies on the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "They used to prophesy, as the daughters of Philip, as Agabus, as these very persons among the Corinthians, of whom he saith, 'Let the prophets speak, two or three.' And writing also to Timothy, he said, 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy.' And they were much more numerous then, than under the old covenant: the gift not having devolved on some ten, and twenty, and fifty, and a hundred, but this grace was poured out abundantly, and every church had many that prophesied."\*

The sum of what the New Testament teaches con-

\* "Library of the Fathers," vol. iv., p. 437.

cerning prophets and prophesying in the Christian church may be summed up in the following particulars :—

1. The Christian prophets were persons who spoke under the direct and immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, mixing the utterance of evangelical truth with prayer and thanksgiving to God.

2. The persons who possessed and exercised the gift of prophecy were not officers set apart for this service, but were both ministers and private members of the church ; the Holy Spirit imparting this qualification to whom He pleased. “To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ; to another faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ; to another the working of miracles ; TO ANOTHER PROPHECY ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues : but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” (1 Cor. xii. 8–11.)

3. A few of the Christian prophets were itinerant, but the greater part of them were stationary. Agabus belonged to the church at Jerusalem ; yet we find him both at Antioch and at Cæsarea ; (Acts xi. 27, 28 ; xxi. 10 ;) but other prophets are generally spoken of as members of particular churches.

4. The gift of prophecy was possessed by many female members of the church, as well as by men. The four daughters of Philip are examples ; and in the church at Corinth St. Paul directed that when the women prophesied in the congregation, their heads should be veiled. “Every woman that prayeth or pro-

phesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head." (1 Cor. xi. 5.)

5. Great spiritual benefit resulted from the exercise of the prophetic gift in the Christian church. It was, for instance, a means of the conversion of the heathen to Christianity. "If all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.) The exercise of this gift must also have imparted great liveliness and spirituality to the public worship of God in the Christian assemblies; for the prophets all spoke by the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, truth, and power. "Ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." (1 Cor. xiv. 31.) "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." (1 Cor. xiv. 3.)

6. It does not appear that any persons were formally ordained to this kind of service in the Christian church; and how long this supernatural gift was continued we are not able to ascertain. Like various other miraculous gifts, it was vouchsafed richly in the early planting of the Christian religion; and was withdrawn when the truth had become generally known, and provision was made for its perpetuity and extension in the world by ordinary means.

## VII.—THE OFFICE OF EVANGELISTS.

THE third class of extraordinary ministers that were employed in the original propagation and establishment of Christianity were the EVANGELISTS ; who occupied a middle position between the apostles and the ordinary ministers of the Gospel. To this class belonged Philip, Barnabas, Silas, Luke, Mark, Timothy, and Titus. These men were not apostles, in the strict and proper meaning of that term ; for the whole of them were not inspired with a perfect knowledge of Christian doctrine, and of their duty with respect to it. In proof of this we may allege the fact, that to two of them, Timothy and Titus, St. Paul deemed it requisite to give written instructions, informing them what they were to do, and what they were to teach ; but we never find the apostles thus instructing one another.

On the other hand, the evangelists were not ordinary ministers and pastors of particular churches ; for they were employed in an itinerant service, and travelled very extensively. Barnabas, Silas, Mark, and Luke travelled in company with St. Paul, and also in a state of personal separation from him, preaching the Gospel both to the Jews and the Heathens. Philip we also find at Jerusalem ; (Acts vi. 5 ;) in Samaria, preaching Christ to the people there ; (Acts viii. 5 ;) in the road to Gaza ; (Acts viii. 26 ;) in the various cities between Azotus and Cæsarea.

(Acts viii. 40.) Timothy we find at Lystra ; (Acts xvi. 1 ;) in Macedonia ; (Acts xix. 22 ;) in Corinth ; (1 Cor. iv. 17 ;) promised to Philippi ; (Phil. ii. 19 ;) in Thessalonica ; (1 Thess. iii. 2 ;) in Rome ; (Phil. i. 1 ;) in Ephesus ; (1 Tim. i. 3 ;) in Troas. (2 Tim. iv. 13.) It would not be difficult to trace some of the other evangelists in journeyings almost equally extensive.

The term "evangelist" denotes one who is engaged in the propagation of the Gospel. It corresponds with the word Gospeller, which was used as a name of reproach by the Romanists, at the time of the Protestant Reformation, and applied to the men who were zealously employed in the defence and enforcement of evangelical truth, as it is laid down in the Holy Scriptures, and opposed to the superstitious novelties of Papal Rome. The word "evangelist" occurs repeatedly in the New Testament, and always, I apprehend, in the sense which has just been given. The first place where we meet with it is Acts xxi. 8 : "The next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came to Cæsarea : and we entered into the house of Philip the EVANGELIST, which was one of the seven ;" that is, one of the seven deacons belonging to the church in Jerusalem. (Acts vi. 5.) Having been faithful, as it would appear, in the application of the church's funds, he was raised to a higher service, that of an assistant of the apostles in the propagation of the Gospel, and the settlement of churches, according to a principle which St. Paul recognises, when he says, "They that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. iii. 13.)



The title of evangelist is applied in the same manner to Timothy, whom St. Paul thus addresses: "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an **EVANGELIST**, make full proof of thy ministry." (2 Tim. iv. 5.)

In these texts the word is applied to men personally considered, and as the designation of their proper office and work; but in Eph. iv. 11 it is used to express an order of ministers, to which Philip and Timothy belonged. "He" (Christ) "gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, **EVANGELISTS**; and some, pastors and teachers."

The sum of what the Holy Scriptures contain respecting the office and work of evangelists may, we think, be comprised in the following particulars:—

I. The evangelists were employed, as their name intimates, in preaching the Gospel, in order to the planting of churches, and the edifying of them when planted.

Barnabas was sent to Antioch, by the church at Jerusalem, where he not only encouraged the young converts, and instructed them in the name of the Lord, but also "taught much people," and was a means, with his fellow-labourers in the Gospel, of converting multitudes of heathens to Christianity. (Acts xi. 22–26.) He was afterwards employed, in connexion with St. Paul, in carrying the truth and in forming churches through an extensive district of country, beginning with Cyprus, and ending with Attalia. (Acts xiii., xiv.) At a subsequent period, "Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do." (Acts xv. 36.) This proposal was not carried into effect in consequence of a difference of opinion between the parties concerning

Mark, whom Barnabas desired to have with them as a fellow-labourer, but whom St. Paul was unwilling to trust, in consequence of his former departure from the work. St. Paul therefore chose Silas as his companion in ministerial labour; and Barnabas went forth with his kinsman Mark, to plant new churches, and to confirm in the belief and practice of Christianity those who had been already united in the fellowship of holy love.

In like manner, when Philip went down to Samaria, he “preached Christ unto them.” (Acts viii. 5.) He also preached “Jesus” to the Ethiopian Eunuch, to whom he was sent by an angel, and that with the desired success. (Acts viii. 35.) Afterwards “Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.” (Acts viii. 40.)

That preaching formed an important part of an evangelist’s duty is also manifest from the admonitions which St. Paul addressed to Timothy. “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly **DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.**” (2 Tim. ii. 15.) “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; **PREACH THE WORD**; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.)

II. As the evangelists were required to preach the Gospel with all fidelity and diligence, so they were also employed in the administration of the Christian sacraments.

I know not that we have any particular account of the administration of the Lord’s Supper by any of them; but, as we shall soon perceive, they were sent to appoint

other men to administer this holy ordinance ; and hence there can be no doubt that they themselves were authorized to administer it : for it is a positive contradiction to say that they imparted to others an authority which they did not themselves possess.

With respect to baptism, we have an example of the administration of it by an evangelist in the person of Philip. He baptized the Eunuch in the open desert ; and he also baptized considerable numbers of the Samaritans, both men and women. It is, however, remarkable, that in Samaria “unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them : and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed :” yet the Holy Ghost fell upon none of them until Peter and John, hearing of what was done, came and laid their hands upon these people, and prayed for them. (Acts viii. 5, 17.) It would therefore appear that while Philip was an able and successful preacher of the Gospel, and while his doctrine was attested by miracles, he had not the power, which the apostles possessed, of imparting the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit to others.

III. The evangelists were especially employed, under the direction of the apostles, in regulating the affairs of churches.

When an apostle had succeeded in raising up a considerable number of converted people, in any particular city or district, it sometimes happened that he could not remain among these people a sufficient time to introduce among them the entire order and discipline of a Christian church. The gifts and piety of the people were not at once developed, so as to show which of them were suitable to be entrusted with the pastoral oversight of

their brethren, and who were proper to be entrusted with the church's funds. Other men were therefore sent to complete the arrangements which were necessary in order to the establishment, the edification, and the usefulness of the people whom an apostle had succeeded in "turning from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

In this kind of service Timothy and Titus were both engaged; and the Epistles which St. Paul addressed to them, giving them instruction as to the fulfilment of their difficult task, contain those elements of ecclesiastical order which are intended to regulate all churches till the end of the world. The leading doctrines of Christianity, which ministers are bound to teach, are here specified; the kind of men that are suitable for the office of bishops and of deacons is here described; and the apostle shows in what manner widows and aged people are to be treated; how the young are to conduct themselves; and how offenders are to be dealt with, so that the honour of the Christian name may be maintained, and individual churches may answer the purpose of their formation as witnesses for Christ in the world.

Some persons among the Christians at Ephesus had manifested a disposition to depart from the simplicity of evangelical truth, by an admixture with it of human error and speculation; and hence Timothy was appointed to correct this and every similar evil, and to introduce among the people a pure and godly discipline. "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies." (1 Tim. i. 3, 4.)

The island of Crete was the field of labour allotted for

a time to Titus, whose task is thus described by St. Paul: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting,"—or, as the marginal rendering is, "the things left undone,"—"and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." (Titus i. 5.) The qualifications of elders are then specified, as well as those of deacons, that the evangelist might know how he ought to fulfil his high commission, by selecting suitable men to take charge both of the spiritual and temporal concerns of the various churches.

IV. Considering the nature of the work which was assigned to the evangelists, it is evident that they needed special qualifications, which God only could impart; and hence this class of officers are spoken of as God's gift.

Theirs was an itinerant and missionary ministry. They were sent to carry the Gospel both to the Jews and the heathen, many of whom were not only unwilling to receive it, but treated its advocates with the bitterest hostility. Like Saul of Tarsus, in his unconverted state, they "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against" all who came to them with the Gospel message. It required therefore no small degree of zeal for the glory of God, of love for the souls of men; of courage, fortitude, and patience; to endure every form of opposition, to force the truth upon the attention of men who hated its very name; and daily to live in the spirit of martyrdom, choosing rather to endure stripes, imprisonment, and death, than retire ingloriously from the field of conflict, and seek their safety in private life.

In regulating the affairs of churches theirs was often a work of great difficulty. When called to appoint men to the pastoral charge, they would find it necessary to pass by the man of a forward disposition, of voluble



speech, of superficial piety, and of a vain and ambitious mind; selecting in preference the man of solid judgment, of deep seriousness, of meekness, and retiring worth, of earnest and laborious zeal. In the faithful discharge of his duty, an evangelist must often frustrate the hopes of an aspirant to office, and grieve the friends of the disappointed man. It might sometimes happen that a private member of the church might be personally well qualified for the office of an elder, or of a deacon, but his family might be heathen, or dissolute; and this would be a serious hindrance in the way of his appointment; for the family of a minister, as well as himself, ought to be an example of Christian purity and order.

In cases of scandal, when sin had been committed, it was often a matter of difficulty to proportion the censure to the offence, so as to maintain the honour of the church and of the work of God, and yet save the offender, who had brought a reproach upon his brethren, and upon the name of Christ. It is therefore easy to perceive that a judgment calm and discriminating, an undeviating regard for the honour of God, a tender love for the souls of men, and a determination to combine righteousness with mercy,—conniving at no sin, and yet saving every one that it was possible to save,—were essential qualifications for a man who was employed in this kind of service. His difficulties were many, and the responsibility that rested upon him was awful.

The solemnity and impressiveness with which St. Paul addresses Timothy demonstrate the importance that was attached to the office of an evangelist. “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without pre-

ferring one before another,"—or, "without prejudice," as the marginal rendering is,—“doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.” (1 Tim. v. 20–22.)

The men who were able to discharge the difficult duties of an evangelist with fidelity and success were raised up by the special providence and grace of God, and were the gifts of Christ to His church and the world. This St. Paul has expressly asserted, declaring that when Christ ascended up on high, having accomplished the great work of redemption, He gave evangelists, as well as apostles and prophets, pastors and teachers, “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” (Eph. iv. 11–13.) The evangelists, therefore, as the servants of Christ, were raised up by Him, and qualified for that peculiar kind of work in which their lives were spent. As their duties were arduous and difficult, they stood in constant need of Divine help. In their case merely human strength and wisdom were unavailing. St. Paul, therefore, with mingled tenderness and fidelity, said to Timothy, who probably quailed under his responsibilities, “My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. ii. 1.)

V. No intimation is given in the New Testament, that the peculiar office of the evangelists was intended to be perpetual.

They were directed to ordain men to the ordinary ministry, but not to the kind of service that was assigned

to themselves ; partly in planting and partly in regulating churches, and generally acting in immediate connexion with the apostles, or under their personal direction. Their office was, in point of fact, auxiliary to that of the apostles : and when the last of the apostles died, the office of the evangelists, we presume, would cease, as a matter of course ; because there was no one that could give them authority to control and regulate churches which they had never planted, and with which therefore they had no official connexion. The office of the evangelists was therefore extraordinary, and to a certain extent depended upon the apostles.

While the twelve lived, their power under Christ was absolute, and they could employ whom they pleased in the cause of Christianity. St. Paul, for instance, could direct Timothy to inquire into the affairs of the Ephesian church, to rebuke offenders, and appoint men to particular offices there ; and it was the duty of all these parties to submit to Timothy under this appointment : but beyond the commission which he had received from St. Paul, Timothy, it would appear, had no authority to do these things ; and it is not likely that he would ever undertake them in any churches which he had not himself planted, except under apostolic sanction. The same remarks will apply to the other evangelists. It was their duty to preach the Gospel, and in this manner save as many souls, and plant as many churches, as they possibly could ; and into these churches it was equally their duty to introduce all the elements of Christian order : but they could have no power over other churches, when the apostles had ceased to give it. The office of a modern missionary, who carries the Gospel to the heathen, bears a near resemblance to that of a pri-

mitive evangelist, but is not identical with it ; because the modern missionary has no commission from an apostle to control and regulate churches which other men have planted. With this important exception, however, the missionary who goes forth under official sanction to convert the heathen, constrained by the love of Christ, is a true evangelist, worthy of all esteem, and is eminently entitled to the sympathy and prayers of good men.

## VIII.—THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

THE extraordinary ministers whom it pleased the Lord Jesus to employ in the first planting of Christianity in the world—apostles, prophets, and evangelists—were only continued for one age; but there were other ministers appointed under apostolic sanction, whose services are intended to be perpetuated till the end of time. They are of two classes, or orders,—bishops or elders, and deacons; for the three orders, bishops, priests, and deacons, as they are popularly understood, we do not acknowledge as of scriptural authority. Bishops or elders were officially entrusted with the spiritual concerns of the church, and the deacons with its temporal affairs. This was the difference between their respective callings; although neither class was absolutely debarred from all interference with the functions of the other; for we shall find, as we proceed in our inquiry, that sums of money belonging to the church were placed at the disposal of the bishops or elders; and some of the deacons, at least, were employed in preaching the Gospel.

We will confine our attention at present to the ministers who were entrusted with the spiritual concerns of the church, leaving the office and work of deacons for future examination.

As the subject before us is of great importance, con-



sidered in itself, and has acquired an especial interest in these days of ecclesiastical controversy and dogmatism, it would ill become us to pass it over in a light and cursory manner. It involves the defence, as well as the right direction, of the Wesleyan ministry; and on this account demands from us at least a close and serious attention. In our attempt to exhibit the subject in its various bearings, we will first examine the names and titles by which this class of ministers are designated in Holy Scripture: secondly, show that, according to the New Testament, elders and bishops are one order of ministers: thirdly, state the peculiar duties which devolved upon them: fourthly, explain the nature of the qualifications which their office required. The discussion of these points will bring before us some of the most prominent church controversies of the present times.

I. The names and titles by which those ministers were designated who were entrusted with the spiritual concerns of the church claim our first attention.

1. The first title that we will mention is that of elders, or presbyters. The Greek term, that is used in the New Testament, is *πρεσβύτεροι*. It is usually rendered "elders" in our authorized version, but generally "presbyters" by ecclesiastical writers. This term was of very ancient use among the Jews, being applied by them to a large class of civil officers, and was expressive of dignity and respect; for it denoted not only age, but authority. In Egypt the Jews had some kind of government among themselves, which was vested in the heads of their tribes, who were called elders. These men Moses was directed to collect together, for the purpose of explaining to them the design of God respecting the

immediate deliverance of the people, and, of course, to engage their co-operation in the great work. "And God said unto Moses,.....Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers.....appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt : and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites," &c. (Exod. iii. 15-17.) It is added in the history, "And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel : and Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people." (Exod. iv. 29, 30.)

At a later period seventy of these men were selected by Divine appointment, as a council, to co-operate with Moses in the government of the nation. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them ;.....and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them ; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." (Num. xi. 16, 17.) It is added, "And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders." (Verses 24, 25.) This arrangement was perpetuated among the Jews ; for in the days of our Saviour and of the apostles we find the affairs of

the nation directed and controlled by elders, who formed what was called the sanhedrim, the council, or the senate of the people. Reference is often made to them in the New Testament ; and before them the apostles were repeatedly brought, in Jerusalem, to answer the charges which were preferred against them on account of the evangelical ministry with which they were intrusted. Gamaliel, who was one of their number, advised that they should "refrain from these men, and let them alone." (Acts v. 38.)

In addition to these seventy elders, there were, it would seem, in the various towns and cities of Judæa, men who bore the same name, and who were invested with local authority to decide cases of litigation among the people. They were called "the elders of the city," and "the elders of the people;" and usually sat to hear causes in the gates of their respective cities. In the book of Ezra we read of "the elders of every city;" (x. 14 ;) and, in the case of Naomi, it is said that Boaz went up to the gate, and laid the matter at issue between him and another member of the family before "ten men of the elders of the city." (Ruth iv. 1, 2.) The centurion, also, in Capernaum, when he wanted Jesus to heal his servant, "sent unto Him the elders of the Jews," to request the favour in his behalf. (Luke vii. 3.)

We have, indeed, a class of civil officers in England who bear a similar designation. We mean the aldermen of our corporate towns, who in the first instance, doubtless, derived their name from their age. They are supposed to be senior men ; and on account of their experience and knowledge, they are invested with the authority which they possess. The English name of

alderman, or elderman, etymologically considered, answers exactly to *πρεσβύτερος* in the Greek of the New Testament.

When Christian churches were planted, as the fruit of evangelical preaching, and as the direct effect of the Holy Spirit's grace, the men who were appointed to teach and guide them, and to watch over them in the Lord, were called by the same name; which was not given to them by accident or caprice, but by Divine appointment, being applied to them by inspired apostles. It is therefore said of Barnabas and Saul, that "when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." (Acts xiv. 23.) "From Miletus" Paul "sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." (Acts xx. 17.) Titus was left in Crete, that he might "ordain elders in every city," as St. Paul had appointed him. (Titus i. 5.) This title was, indeed, sometimes given to the apostles; St. Peter and St. John applying it to themselves; for while the apostles, the evangelists, and the ordinary ministers sustained different offices, there were duties that were common to them all. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder," (1 Peter v. 1,) is the language of St. Peter; and St. John addresses both "the elect lady and her children," and the "well-beloved Gaius," under the name of "the elder." (2 John 1; 3 John 1.)

It is therefore clear that the title of "elder," or "presbyter," which was given to the ordinary ministers of the Gospel, was one of dignity and respect. It had long been known in the Jewish church as the designation of magistrates and rulers; men who were regarded as the ministers and servants of God, whose calling it was to

repress evil, to defend the weak, and to promote the public security and happiness. The title, when it received this new application, being given to Christian ministers, was, of course, understood to signify age, wisdom, and authority. When applied to the apostles and ordinary ministers of Christ, it was no designation of secular power and greatness, but conveyed a just intimation that these functionaries, however hated and despised by a profane world, were men of wisdom, invested with spiritual authority, and were therefore entitled to deference and respect. It is an important fact, that when the Holy Ghost qualified men for the Christian ministry, and called them to its momentous duties, He selected as their title one of the most honourable terms that the Scriptures of the Old Testament could supply.

2. The second scriptural title of Christ's ordinary ministers that we will mention is that of bishops. The Greek word is *ἐπίσκοποι*, the proper meaning of which is, "inspectors, overseers, superintendents, guardians." Among the Athenians an *ἐπίσκοπος* was a magistrate, who was sent out to tributary cities, for the purpose of organizing and governing them in behalf of the parent state. He was not to introduce among them such regulations as he might deem proper, but such as were prescribed by the power that sent him forth, and gave him his commission. In like manner, the church of Christ, in all its departments, is to be governed by His laws.

The title of "bishop" is given to Christ Himself, by the apostle Peter, who denominates Him "the Shepherd and Bishop of souls." (1 Peter ii. 25.) For His eye is upon all His people, observing their wants, that He may supply them; observing their dangers, that He



may afford them protection; observing their sorrows and trials, that He may administer to them strength and comfort; observing their thoughts, desires, purposes, words, and actions, that He may judge them in perfect righteousness. His is a just and compassionate oversight, of which everyone will be ultimately convinced.

A true minister of Christ has not assumed the office of a bishop, nor been placed in it by merely human authority. He is Divinely qualified for His work, and Divinely called to the fulfilment of its duties. Addressing the ministers of the church at Ephesus, St. Paul said, "Take heed to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," or "bishops." (Acts xx. 28.) The same apostle addresses one of his Epistles "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons;" (Phil. i. 1;) and his Epistles to Timothy and Titus state what bishops ought to be in respect of character and qualifications.

The responsibility which is connected with the office of a Christian minister is strikingly indicated by the term "bishop," or "overseer." The man who sustains that office is intrusted with the care of a people whom the Son of God has redeemed by His blood, and many of whom He has sanctified by His grace; and for every one of them an account must be given in the last great day. He is appointed to watch over them with reference to their spiritual interests, in comparison with which their health and property are of no account. When they are in danger, he is to warn them; when they are in trouble, he is to encourage and comfort them; when they present signs of negligence and lukewarmness, he is to admonish them with all fidelity and tender affection. He is not only to aim at their preservation from evil in

every form, but at their advancement in all that is upright, wise, and holy. His eye is to be upon every one, and at all times; for, as Christ is the supreme Bishop of souls, all those whom the Holy Ghost has made bishops under Him are to “watch for souls, as they that must give account.” (Heb. xiii. 17.)

3. The third scriptural title of Christ’s ministers that we will mention is that of “teachers.” The Greek term is διδάσκαλοι, which signifies “teachers, masters, instructors, doctors.” Our blessed Lord, in the narratives of the evangelists, is often called, and that by way of eminence, ὁ Διδάσκαλος, and in almost every instance the word is rendered “Master” in our Authorised Version. He is indeed the Great Teacher come from God; and having imparted to His apostles a knowledge of the truth which He came to declare, He directed them to announce the same verities to all nations, not as matters of curiosity, or of airy speculation, but with a reference to practice: “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever” He had “commanded” them. (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) St. Paul, therefore, having received his Lord’s commission, professes himself to be “a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity;” (1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11;) and he describes all labourers in the Gospel as “teaching every man in all wisdom.” (Col. i. 28.)

The same apostle states, as we have formerly seen, that evangelical teachers are the gift of God to the church and the world, as well as apostles, prophets, and evangelists. In the appointment of elders and bishops he directs Timothy to select men who should be “able to teach others,” and who should indeed be “apt to teach.” (2 Tim. ii. 2; 1 Tim. iii. 2.) The title of teacher, then, conveys a very impressive view of the ministerial

office. No man is fit for that office unless he have a correct knowledge of the Gospel, and an ability to communicate to others the knowledge which he himself possesses. The man whose ministrations are so confused, perplexed, and dark as to be generally unintelligible, or so commonplace and trite as to convey no instruction, whatever he may be called, is no teacher; and the discourses of the man who confines himself to a portion only of evangelical truth, are seriously defective. A minister is a teacher whose labours are intended to raise up an intelligent and holy people, who shall be steadfast in their Christian profession, and not to be tossed about with every wind of doctrine; and in order to the accomplishment of this end, he must present to them a clear exposition and defence of the entire system of evangelical truth. Everything that Christ has revealed and commanded the Christian teacher is to expound, so as to make his hearers wise unto salvation.

4. A fourth scriptural title that we will mention, as given to the ordinary ministers of Christ, is that of "pastors," or "shepherds." This name is expressly applied to them in Eph. iv. 11; and in many other texts it is given to them by implication. Our blessed Lord calls Himself "the good Shepherd;" (John x. 11;) St. Paul calls Him "that great Shepherd of the sheep;" (Heb. xiii. 20;) and St. Peter calls Him "the chief Shepherd." (1 Peter v. 4.) He laid down his life for the sheep, having purchased them with His own blood; and hence they are His property. He has committed a portion of them to the care of every true minister, upon whom, as an under-shepherd, devolves the twofold duty of supplying them with pasturage, and of guarding them from spiritual and moral harm.

That we may correctly understand this subject, we must remember that the Bible is not originally an English, but an Oriental book, so that its allusions and imagery do not always fully accord with Western manners and customs. The work of a shepherd in England differs very materially from that of a shepherd in the East. In our own country the fields are generally enclosed, so that the flocks are mostly left to themselves, being thus prevented from straying abroad. But in the East, where the fields were all open, the flocks required the constant presence of the shepherd, that they might not stray and perish. There they were also liable to be devoured by beasts of prey. Jacob therefore endured the frost by night, as well as the sun by day, while he had the charge of Laban's herds. The shepherds in Judæa were employed in "keeping watch over their flocks by night," when the angel announced to them the birth of the world's Redeemer. In the East, therefore, the office of a shepherd involved no small degree of labour, vigilance, and self-denial. When Christian ministers, then, are called "shepherds," we are given to understand that their office is no sinecure, but requires incessant care and toil.

The food which the pastors of Christ's flock are to provide for the people of their charge is that of evangelical truth, in all its richness and variety; according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, which is given in the form of a promise from God, and relates especially to the times of the Gospel. "I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jer. iii. 15.) It is according to the "heart" of God that His people should be richly fed in the green pastures of sacred truth.

While the Christian pastor thus feeds his flock, he is to watch over them, so as to guard them from evil, as much as lies in his power, preserving them in a state of spiritual health and vigour, free from the infection of deadly error and of sinful practice. Such as would corrupt the rest in these respects, he must separate from the flock, and carefully guard the whole of them from every beast of prey. The care of the church is essential to the pastoral office.

5. There is another title given to the ministers of Christ, which is nearly allied to that of pastors. It is rendered "rulers" in our Authorised Version. "Obey them that have the rule over you." (Heb. xiii. 17.) Mr. Wesley's exposition of this text is very striking. "*Obey them that have the rule over you*—The word implies, also, that lead or guide you; namely, in truth and holiness. *And submit yourselves*—Give up (not your conscience or judgment, but) your own will, in all things purely indifferent. *For they watch over your souls*—With all zeal and diligence, they guard and caution you against all danger. *As they that must give account*—To the great Shepherd, for every part of their behaviour toward you. How vigilant, then, ought every pastor to be! how careful of every soul committed to his charge! *That they may do this*—Watch over you. *With joy and not with groans*—He is not a good shepherd, who does not either rejoice over them, or groan for them. The groans of other creatures are heard: how much more shall these come up in the ears of God! Whoever answers this character of a Christian pastor may undoubtedly demand this obedience."

These are the principal titles that are applied in the New Testament to the ministers of Christ; and it is



observable that we do not find among them the term "priest," in the sense of a sacrificer, which so many modern Episcopalians greatly affect. The proper name of a priest, in this sense, is *ιερεὺς*, which is never once given, either by our Lord or His apostles, to Christian ministers of any class, considered as such. The Gospel acknowledges no proper priesthood but that of Christ; who is a Priest for ever, not after the order of Aaron, but of Melchizedek. Having finished the work of atonement for sin by His death on the cross, Christ has for ever rendered nugatory and vain every other propitiatory offering, by whomsoever it may be made and presented. Sacrifice, in the sense of Divine worship, and of holy obedience,—that is, figurative sacrifice,—God requires, and will accept; and therefore all His people, both in earth and heaven, are called priests to Him. But in this respect His ministers have no pre-eminence over the humblest members of His church. No sacrifices will God now accept but such as are spiritual; and all His people are sanctified to Him that they may continually offer them.

Our English word "priest" is doubtless derived from the word "presbyter;" and in no other sense but that of presbyter or elder should it ever be applied to the ministers of Christ. The priesthood of Aaron's order for ever terminated when the sacrifice of the Cross was offered.

II. The question of a disparity between bishops and presbyters claims our attention next in order. It has often been agitated, especially since the time of the Protestant Reformation, and cannot with propriety be passed over in this place.

Many advocates of Episcopacy maintain that bishops

were originally instituted by God as an order of ministers superior to presbyters ; so that while every bishop is a presbyter, inasmuch as the greater office includes the less, no presbyter is a bishop without a distinct and separate ordination, investing him with powers which as a mere presbyter he did not possess.

Men who are thus invested with the episcopal office, it is contended, have the exclusive right to ordain other ministers, whether presbyters or deacons, and to govern them when ordained. So vehemently have many writers asserted this doctrine, that they have made the salvation of men to depend upon it ; vehemently declaring that the valid administration of the sacraments and of the word of life depends upon an ordination to the sacred office by the imposition of a bishop's hands ; considering the bishop, so ordaining, as belonging to a distinct and peculiar order, essentially superior to the order of mere presbyters or elders. It is upon this assumption that the Ritualistic party at this day found their claims ; protesting that no man professing Christianity has any authority to expect the salvation of God, unless he attend the ministrations of one who has been episcopally ordained, and receive the sacraments at his hands. They teach that none but Episcopalians are within the pale of the Church of Christ ; and that the only hope which can be justly entertained respecting the rest of mankind is, that, by possibility, there may be some mercy reserved for them in a future state, for which the covenant of grace, as it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, makes no provision. But of "uncovenanted mercy," of course, no man can be assured. Such are the claims of High Churchmen, which they hold in common with the intolerant clerics of Rome.

On the other hand, it is contended by men who are no less learned and pious, that, according to the will and appointment of God, as they are revealed in the New Testament, bishops and presbyters are one order of ministers, who possess the same powers, and sustain precisely the same office, in the church of God ;\* and therefore have no superiority over each other, but such as they may voluntarily concede, on account of age, or talent, or in order to a more efficient discharge of their ministerial duties. According to the views of these men, every true bishop is a presbyter, and every true presbyter is a bishop ; having the same authority to preach the word, to administer the sacraments, to enforce discipline, and to ordain others to the holy ministry. This is the doctrine which we undertake to defend : and, in the prosecution of our purpose, we will endeavour, first, to prove the point from the Holy Scriptures ; secondly, to answer the most plausible objections ; and, thirdly, to exhibit the practical bearing of the subject.

We appeal to the testimony of Holy Scripture on the identity of bishops and presbyters, or elders. This is our true standard of appeal. Whatever doctrine or institution there may be, that cannot be fairly proved from the Bible, it is, at best, only a matter of prudential arrangement, however beneficial it may be ; and therefore ought not to be obtruded upon the consciences of men as essential to their salvation. “ Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation : so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that

\* See Note L, at the end of the volume.

it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." \*

The first passage of Scripture that we will adduce, in proof of the identity of bishops and presbyters, is Acts xx. 17, compared with the twenty-eighth verse of the same chapter. "And from Miletus he" (Paul) "sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church,"—*τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους*, "the presbyters," as the word is in the Greek. When these Ephesian presbyters were assembled together, the apostle thus addressed them: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers:"—*ἐπισκόπους*, "bishops," is the term which the apostle uses; so that the same men who are called "presbyters" in the seventeenth verse, are called "bishops" in the twenty-eighth. From the entire narrative we learn,—

1. That there were several bishops in the church at Ephesus. How many of them there were we are not informed; but they are always spoken of in the plural form, as presbyters and bishops. Now it is a maxim among strict Episcopalians, that there cannot be more than one bishop in the same place, possessing and exercising episcopal authority and jurisdiction. If there be two, there is schism; and much more if there are three or four. Accordingly, in the Church of England, which has adopted this mode of ecclesiastical order, there is only one Bishop of London, one of Winchester, one of Exeter, and so of all the other dioceses; although in each diocese there is an indefinite number of presbyters. It is true that in these dioceses there are Romish bishops, exercising an independent jurisdiction;

\* Sixth Article of the Church of England.

but then they charge the Protestant bishops with schism, and the Protestant bishops charge them with the same sin. It follows then, by necessary consequence, that these forms of episcopacy are a departure from the apostolic order, as it existed in the church at Ephesus. In that city there were many presbyters, all of whom were addressed and recognised as bishops by an inspired apostle.

2. The bishops at Ephesus were all presbyter-bishops, being on an equality with respect to order. For no one among them is singled out, as superior to the rest; nor is any intimation of the kind given in the narrative. They all bear the same titles, and receive the same counsel and admonitions; clearly implying that their office, powers, duties, and obligations were the same. They are all presbyters, and all bishops, standing in the same relation to one another, and to the church with which they were connected. Not the most distant hint is given of any inequality among them, either by St. Paul, who addresses them, or by St. Luke, who has given an account of their call to Miletus, and of their interview with the apostle.

3. The Ephesian bishops were not bishops over one another, or over any class of pastors, but over the people of God who were among them. "Take heed to all THE FLOCK, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you OVERSEERS," or BISHOPS. "Feed the CHURCH OF GOD." Modern bishops are the overseers or rulers of the clergy, including presbyters and deacons, and seldom have any direct pastoral intercourse with the people who constitute what are called "the flock:" whereas the bishops at Ephesus were intrusted especially with the care of the congregation of Christ's people; being ap-



pointed to feed them with wholesome doctrine, and preserve among them a godly discipline and order, separating from the faithful such persons as indulged themselves in sin, and refused to be reclaimed.

4. The men whom St. Paul addressed had been invested with the office they sustained by the Holy Ghost. "The HOLY GHOST hath made you overseers," or bishops, is the declaration of the apostle. What these men were, as to their office and calling, they had been made, not by men merely, but by the Spirit of God. He had imparted to them their qualifications to teach and to govern; He had called them to the work in which they were employed; and He had clothed them with the power and authority which they possessed and exercised in the church of God. They had not assumed the sacred office, nor was the office itself a human device. They had doubtless been regularly ordained to their work; but their ordination was only an official and formal recognition of their Divine qualifications and call. They were presbyter-bishops, and were made such by the Holy Ghost. Here, then, we have episcopacy by Divine right; but it is episcopacy possessed and exercised by presbyters. Such are the bishops that the Holy Ghost created at Ephesus: and bishops of no other kind do we read of in the oracles of God; although much is said concerning other bishops in the "Tracts for the Times," and other publications of merely human authority.

The next passage of Holy Scripture that we will adduce, as bearing upon this question, is Titus i. 5-7: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Here

again the apostle's word is *πρεσβυτέρους*, *presbyters*. He goes on to say, "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop" (*ἐπίσκοπον*) "must be blameless, as the steward of God." Upon this text we will just offer two observations for the purpose of proving our point; namely, that presbyters and bishops, in the estimation of the inspired apostle of the Gentiles, were one order.

1. His argument undeniably assumes this fact. Titus was left in Crete, for this object among others, that he might ordain elders, or presbyters, in the several churches of the island. Then the question arose, What kind of men was he to select and ordain under this designation? The apostle's answer is, They must be blameless, both in their personal character, and in the management of their families; for this reason, that a BISHOP must be blameless: clearly assuming that the presbyter and the bishop are the same; for otherwise the apostle's reason is foreign from the question. According to modern usage, the office and work of a bishop are very different from those of a presbyter, who is a rector, the vicar of a parish, or a curate; and had the same difference prevailed in the apostolic times between bishops and presbyters, or ordinary pastors, St. Paul would never have assumed that the qualifications of both are the same. Imagine a man sent to select a suitable minister to be the clergyman of a parish; whose duties are to preach, to administer the sacraments, to visit the sick, to bury the dead, solemnize marriages, and superintend the education of the children in the church-schools. The man to whom this service is confided asks what qualifications the minister whom he

shall choose and appoint must possess ; and he is told that they are such as would qualify him to govern the clergy of an extensive diocese, including some hundreds of clergymen ! Every one must perceive that the answer is not only absurd, but ridiculous. But St. Paul was an inspired apostle, and therefore could not give an irrelevant answer, either in this or in any other case. When he says that the qualifications of a presbyter are the qualifications of a bishop, he teaches that a bishop and a presbyter are the same ; their office and work in the church of God are identical.

2. St. Paul directs that presbyter-bishops should be ordained in the various cities of the island of Crete. Supposing diocesan episcopacy to have then prevailed, one bishop would have been sufficient to superintend all the other ministers in the island. But this is not the order that St. Paul contemplates. There were several churches in the island, situated in the several cities there ; and in each of those cities the apostle directs that there should be ordained, not one presbyter-bishop, but two or more, according to the number of converted people which the churches comprehended. “ I left thee in Crete,” says he, “ that thou shouldest ordain,” not AN ELDER, but “ ELDERS,” that is, presbyters, bishops, of the kind already described, “ IN EVERY CITY.” As there were several presbyter-bishops in the church at Ephesus, so the apostle directs that there shall be several in each church of Crete. Titus was not directed to ordain A BISHOP in Crete, who should superintend all the other ministers in the island ; and it is clear that there was no such bishop there already : for it is inconceivable that Titus would have been solemnly commissioned to perform a work which had with equal solemnity

been assigned to another man. But the fact is, that diocesan episcopacy, such as now prevails, was not the order which the apostles established in the churches which they planted and organized.

A third text of Holy Scripture which bears upon the question now before us is 1 Peter v. 1, 2 : "The elders," *πρεσβυτέρους*, *presbyters*, "which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder," *συμπρεσβύτερος*, a co-presbyter, or a fellow-elder,.....' feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof,"—*ἐπισκοποῦντες*, *episcopizing*, or *acting as bishops*,—"not by constraint, but willingly." Here again, then, we find not only presbyters spoken of as bishops, but the fulfilment of episcopal duties is solemnly charged upon them by an apostle, as matter of sacred obligation; and that through the whole extent of "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia:" a clear and decisive proof that the identity of presbyters and bishops was then generally acknowledged in the Christian church. What their duties were we are here informed. They relate directly and especially to "the flock of God," which in this evil world needs careful instruction, encouragement, and supervision. The ministers of Christ are to feed His people with wholesome truth, and to watch over them with ceaseless care, as a faithful shepherd watches over his flock in an eastern desert, where wild beasts are continually prowling, ready to seize and devour the lambs and the sheep.

We cannot but regard these passages of Holy Scripture as decisive of the question before us. They prove, beyond all possibility of successful contradiction, that in the churches which the apostles planted and superintended there was no such distinction between bishops

and presbyters as modern episcopacy recognises. In the apostolic churches the bishops were presbyters, and the presbyters were bishops. These two names were indifferently applied to the ordinary pastors and teachers of God's people.

We will now adduce one or two other texts of Holy Scripture, which contain proof of the same point, although the evidence which they supply is collateral and indirect. In these texts there are omissions for which it is impossible to account, but upon the principle for which we contend,—we mean, the identity of bishops and presbyters. The first example of this kind that we will specify is Phil. i. 1: “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” It is not the usual practice of St. Paul, in his Epistles, to address particularly the ministers of the churches to whom he wrote, but simply the churches themselves, yet, of course, including the ministers. But, in writing to the Philippians, he departs from his usual course, and mentions first “the saints;” that is, the sanctified believers who constituted the church generally; then “the bishops,” who had the charge of the spiritual interests of the people, including instruction and government; and next he mentions the “deacons,” to whose care and fidelity was intrusted the church's property, and its right application. Now supposing that there was a third order of ministers in the church at Philippi, answering to modern presbyters, and distinct from the bishops and deacons, it is impossible that the apostle should have treated them with such marked disrespect as to pass them over in entire silence. The natural inference, therefore, is, that there was no other



class of ministers there ; but that, as in the case of the other churches, the spiritual pastors and teachers were known by the names of "bishops" and "presbyters," which were applied to them indifferently. This inference is confirmed by the fact, that the church at Philippi had more than one bishop. How many they had, we are not informed ; but they are denominated "bishops : " a decisive proof that theirs was not modern episcopacy, which allows of no more than one bishop in a city, or even in an extensive diocese.

The view which we have taken of this subject receives a direct confirmation from St. Paul's First Epistle to Timothy. This evangelist was left in Ephesus for the same purpose as that for which Titus was left in Crete. Titus, as we have seen, was to ordain presbyters as bishops. To Timothy are given directions respecting the ordination of bishops ; but not a word is said to him concerning the selection and appointment of presbyters, as a distinct order. The only inference that we can fairly draw from this fact is that to which we have so often adverted ; namely, that bishops and presbyters were one and the same order of ministers ; so that when Timothy ordained bishops, he ordained presbyters by the same act ; just as Titus, in ordaining presbyters, who were possessed of episcopal qualifications, ordained bishops. The men were the same, their office was the same, their duties were the same. Whereas the work and office of a diocesan prelate is very different from that of a scriptural bishop. The office of a diocesan prelate is that of ordaining men to the ministry, of exercising jurisdiction over them when ordained, and of laying his hands upon the heads of baptized children at a certain age. He may preach occasionally when he finds

it convenient; but with him the duties of the pulpit, and of pastoral intercourse with the people, are optional. The office of a scriptural bishop is to take the pastoral oversight of the "flock," to feed them with wholesome doctrine, and to maintain among them a pure discipline. He is to "watch for souls as" one "that must give an account" to the Chief Shepherd of all the people that have been placed under his care.

## IX.—THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

WE have attempted to prove the identity of bishops and presbyters in the apostolic churches: a fact which is conceded by several of the most candid and intelligent of the episcopal writers. Others, however, there are who take different ground, and endeavour to neutralize the evidence which is supplied by the texts we have adduced; contending for the order of bishops above presbyters, not by mutual concession and voluntary arrangement among ministers themselves and their people, but by Divine right. The principal pleas which they urge we will now specify and examine.

I. It is urged by some, that in the Old-Testament church there were the high priest, the priests of the house of Aaron, and the body of the Levites; answering to the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons in the Christian church. These arrangements, they say, answer to each other as type and antitype, and afford, if not direct proof, at least a strong presumption, that the three orders in the Christian church are of Divine appointment. In answer to this plea we observe,

1. That such parallels, or analogies, however multiplied, prove nothing in cases of this nature. The kind of proof that is wanted is Scripture precept, Scripture example, or Scripture principle, from which the three

orders may be legitimately inferred, or ascertained to be of Divine appointment. Dr. Frederick Nolan, a learned writer of the present times, and a clergyman of the Church of England, has justly said, with reference to this very subject, "As analogical proofs, however ingenious and pretty in the way of illustration, supply but pitiful substitutes for argument, I may be pardoned for passing them over without a further expression even of my contempt. It will suffice to observe on this subject at present, that they are so little conclusive in establishing the requisite similarity, that opinions as wide as those which they pretend to reconcile are held as to the objects which they undertake to assimilate, so little apparent is the resemblance. They are thus cited with equal justice and confidence by those who suppose the government of the church committed to presbyters or bishops." \*

2. If the fact of three orders in the Jewish priesthood could be ever so clearly established, it would prove nothing with respect to the Christian ministry, the two institutions being widely different both in their nature and objects. The Jewish priests were rather sacrificers than the instructors of the people. Their duties were principally confined to the tabernacle and the temple, where the various sacrificial offerings were presented to God: whereas the people were scattered over the country, except at the times of their three annual assemblies in Jerusalem. With respect to the rites of Divine worship, they received instruction from the priests, to whom they were commanded to resort in all cases of impurity and of sacrifice; and hence the statement of the prophet: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge,

\* Nolan's "Catholic Character of Christianity," pp. 238, 239.

and they should seek the law at his mouth : for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." (Mal. ii. 7.) The priests were also associated with the judges in deciding difficult cases of duty, which the people were themselves unable to solve. (Deut. xvii. 8-13.) But the religious and moral instruction which the people generally received was given in the various synagogues of the land, by the Levites, and by men belonging to any of the tribes of Israel. The duty of officiating in the synagogues is never charged upon the priests, as such ; and no man, to whatever tribe he might belong, was debarred from preaching, expounding the Scriptures, and delivering exhortations there, provided he were deemed competent to the task. We often read in the Old Testament of the "schools of the prophets," but never of the schools of the priests. Our blessed Lord, who belonged to the tribe of Judah, preached in the synagogue of Nazareth ; (Luke iv. 16-27 ;) and St. Paul, who belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, preached in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, at the request of the authorities there. (Acts xiii. 14-41.)

The office of a Jewish priest, and that of a Christian minister, then, are very different. A minister of Christ, as such, is never called a priest in the New Testament, but rather a teacher and pastor. The Jewish priesthood, therefore, was no type of the Christian ministry, but of the sacrificial work of Christ, who is the only priest, properly speaking, that the Gospel acknowledges. The Jewish priesthood was never intended to be perpetuated in the Christian church ; for it ended, and that for ever, when the sacrifice of the Cross was completed. As it was no type of the Christian ministry, it is never mentioned in the New Testament as such. The entire



theory of a priesthood in the Christian church, answering to that of the Levitical race, is not only a mere assumption, destitute of all legitimate proof, but is, in fact, subversive of the whole Gospel. It supposes that an adequate atonement for sin has not yet been made, so that men are still offering expiatory sacrifices at the altars of God. Whereas an inspired apostle has declared that Christ hath "by ONE OFFERING"—the offering of Himself upon the cross—"PERFECTED FOR EVER them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.)

3. The order of the Jewish priesthood, if it were strictly followed in the Christian church, would completely supersede the episcopacy which it is adduced to support. The successive high priests of the Jews are referred to as the prototypes of diocesan bishops. But the fact is, that the high-priesthood was vested in one individual, who had no colleague in his office. Aaron held the office alone; and when he died, it was transferred to Eleazar his son. (Num. xx. 28.) In the early periods of the Jewish church, when its affairs were conducted with regularity, and in accordance with the law, there does not appear to have ever been more than one high priest at the same time. Josephus has given a list of them, as they successively officiated, first in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple, until the time of the Babylonian captivity. After that event great disorders prevailed with respect to this distinguished functionary; men being selected for this service by the civil powers, sometimes by the populace, then excluded after a short time, and others put into the office, who in their turn were dismissed in the same summary manner. Hence we read in the Gospels of "chief priests," in the plural number, who were concerned in the trial of our

blessed Lord. (Matt. xxvii. 1 ; Mark xv. 1 ; Luke xxii. 66.) In this number were doubtless included men who had formerly sustained the office, and had been superseded in it, as well as Caiaphas, "which was the **HIGH PRIEST THAT YEAR.**" (John xviii. 13.) So that amidst all the irregularity and confusion which then prevailed, there does not appear to have been more than one man who sustained the office of high priest at the same time. Caiaphas had no colleague. The other men who were contemporary with him, and are called "high priests," had been deposed from the office, or superseded in it.

Now, that one individual man in the Jewish church should be selected as the type of the entire order of diocesan bishops, comprehending many thousand persons, is a surprising circumstance, and strongly suggests the absence of legitimate argument. If the high priest were the type of any functionary in the Christian church, he must be the type of the Pope ; for as there was only one high priest, so there is only one Pope reigning at the same time. But then there is this inconvenience, which the Protestant advocate of diocesan episcopacy has to surmount, that the popedom is an office of which the New Testament makes no mention, except as an element of a great apostasy which would at length appear : and further, if the Jewish high priest be a type of the Pope, then we find nothing in the Jewish priesthood that answers to the order of diocesan bishops in the Christian church. If the order of the Jewish priesthood, then, be the model of the Christian church, diocesan bishops must be swept away altogether ; and the only hierarchy that remains will consist of a Pope, or a high priest, with presbyters and deacons.

There is another view to be taken of this subject,

which greatly strengthens our argument. It is obvious that there was nothing in the office of the high priesthood that answers to the duties of a modern diocesan bishop. The principal duty of the high priest was that of entering into the most holy place, with the sacrificial blood, on the great day of atonement, as a type of Christ, who entered with His own blood into heaven, "there to appear in the presence of God for us." But what has this to do with the office and work of a diocesan bishop? He never sheds sacrificial blood. He never, in the course of his ministrations, enters with blood either into the holy place made with hands, or into that which is made without hands. Of his official employments neither Aaron nor any of his successors had any conception.

It is evident, therefore, that the order of the Jewish hierarchy, so far from proving the Divine right of diocesan episcopacy, would rather subvert it altogether, and substitute for such episcopacy the government of the church by presbyters, with a Pope at their head: a state of things for which it is presumed few men will contend.

II. Some of the advocates of diocesan episcopacy, by Divine right, urge in proof of their theory the mission of the seventy disciples, viewed in connexion with the mission of the twelve apostles. Our blessed Lord chose twelve men to the office of apostles, and sent them forth to preach; He also sent forth seventy disciples; the apostles being a superior order of ministers, and the seventy of an inferior order, answering, it is said, in these respects, to diocesan bishops and to presbyters. This is a subject upon which Bishop Jeremy Taylor has laid great stress, in his work on episcopacy; stoutly

affirming that these appointments of our Lord justify the episcopal form of government in the Christian church. In answer to this allegation, we observe,

1. That the apostles were not bishops, either in the sense of diocesan rulers of ministers, or in the sense of pastors of particular churches ; nor are they ever called by that name in the inspired writings. We have already seen that their office was peculiar and extraordinary. They were sent to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth, to complete the revelation of it to mankind, and to superintend the establishment of it in the world. This was their calling and work.

2. The mission of the seventy disciples was also peculiar. They do not appear to have been sent forth as permanent preachers of the Gospel, at least in the first instance ; for their commission was not general, like that of the twelve. Our Lord “sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, WHITHER HE HIMSELF WOULD COME ;” and we read that “the seventy returned with joy.” (Luke x. 1, 17.) After this time we have no account of them *as the seventy*. They were doubtless mixed with the disciples in general ; and probably some, or even the whole, of them might be employed in the spread of the Gospel ; but this is merely matter of conjecture, altogether unsupported by Scripture testimony.

3. During the life of our Lord it does not appear that the seventy stood in any relation to the twelve apostles, but that of fellow-disciples and fellow-labourers in the Lord’s vineyard. They were neither called, nor ordained, nor sent forth, nor directed and controlled, by the apostles : and that after our Lord’s ascension they were presbyters, and the apostles their diocesan

bishops, is not only unproved, but contrary to the very letter of Holy Scripture; for the apostles were such bishops of no men. Their mission was too comprehensive for that.

III. The third plea for diocesan episcopacy that we will mention, is founded upon the case of Timothy and Titus. Timothy, it is said, was made the Bishop of Ephesus, and Titus of Crete; being invested with a power to ordain ministers, and then to govern them. With this view of their office, the postscripts which are appended to the Epistles that bear their names are in perfect agreement. That which is affixed to the Second Epistle to Timothy reads thus: "The Second Epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time." The postscript which is appended to St. Paul's Epistle to Titus is equally explicit. It is as follows: "It was written to Titus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians, from Nicopolis of Macedonia." In answer to what is here alleged concerning Timothy and Titus, in defence of diocesan episcopacy, we observe:—

1. That the term "bishop" is never applied in Scripture to the superintendents of ministers, but always to those who sustain the pastoral charge of the people. Scriptural bishops are not the bishops of ministers, but, as we have already seen, bishops of the flock of Christ, who is Himself, by way of eminence, "the Bishop of souls." But neither in one sense nor in the other is this title given either to Timothy or to Titus in Holy Scripture.

2. The postscripts which are affixed to the apostolical Epistles are of no authority whatever. They are all



acknowledged to be apocryphal; and some of them were evidently not written till some hundreds of years after the Epistles. On this subject we cannot do better than repeat the testimony of Dr. George Campbell, an unquestionable authority on subjects of this kind. He says: "As to the dates, or postscripts subjoined to the Epistles in the common Bibles, it is universally agreed among the learned, that they are of no authority. They are not found in some of our best and most ancient manuscripts: they are not the same in all copies, and some of them are evidently false. The time in which they have been annexed is not thought to have been earlier than the fifth century. We know how far, at that time, a species of vanity carried people, to trace the line of their pastors upwards, through a very dark period, to apostles and evangelists, supplying by their guesses the imperfections of tradition. Certain it is, that in the three first centuries neither Timothy nor Titus is styled bishop by any writer. It also deserves to be remarked, that in the island of Crete, of which Titus is said, in the postscript of Paul's Epistle to him, to have been ordained the first bishop, there were no fewer, according to the earliest accounts and catalogues extant, than eleven bishops. Hence it is that Titus has been called by some of the later fathers an archbishop though few of the warmest friends of episcopacy pretend to give an archiepiscopal order so early a date. Yet it is not without some colour of reason that they have named him so; since he was appointed to ordain elders in every city, and had therefore a superintendency for the time over the whole island. Whereas it is well known that, in the earliest times of episcopacy, every city wherein there was a church, that is, wherein there

were Christian converts enow, had its own bishop. Now if such was the case with Titus, he enjoyed an office there in which he had no succession; since in all the ancient history of the church, after the death of the extraordinary ministers, till the rise of the metropolitan jurisdiction, which was near two centuries afterwards, the bishop of a single congregation was the highest order known in the church." \*

3. That Timothy and Titus were not diocesan bishops, is manifest from the fact that they did not permanently remain in the places which are mentioned in the Epistles that St. Paul addressed to them; nor were they intended thus to remain. To Timothy St. Paul says, "I BESOUGHT THEE TO ABIDE STILL AT EPHESUS, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." (1 Tim. i. 3.) If Timothy were appointed the Bishop of Ephesus, and of the surrounding country, where he was to remain for life, according to the modern practice, it is inconceivable that the apostle should have addressed him in this manner. What! beseech a man to abide in the place where the duties of his office exclusively lay! and that man Timothy, one of the most exemplary ministers of even the apostolic times. But it is undeniable, from the inspired history, that Timothy only remained at Ephesus a short time after the apostle had left him. When St. Paul departed from Ephesus, the affairs of the church at that place were not in a satisfactory state. There was among them a want of competent teachers, and those that they had were in danger of departing from the truth. The apostle there-

\* Campbell's "Lectures on Ecclesiastical History," vol. i., pp. 151, 152. Second Edition.

fore requested Timothy to remain there a while longer, when he himself went into Macedonia. But in a comparatively short time we find Timothy again travelling with St. Paul, having, of course, finished in Ephesus the work for which he was left there. We have the history of these transactions in Acts xx. 1-5. It is only requisite to observe, that just before St. Paul took his leave of Ephesus, a riot was created there by the men who "made silver shrines for Diana;" feeling that their "craft was in danger" while the doctrines of Christianity prevailed. But this outbreak of popular indignation was quelled by the prudent and timely interference of the magistrates. "And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, and there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and TIMOTHEUS; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. These going before tarried for us at Troas." When St. Paul had visited the churches in Macedonia and Greece, and then went into Asia, Timothy was among his travelling companions.

In the latter part of the same chapter, we find St. Paul requesting the elders of the church at Ephesus to meet him at Miletus; where he gave them a solemn and impressive charge, in which he reminds them of their responsibilities and duty, warning them of the dangers that awaited the church with which they were

officially connected. In this charge he expressly calls them bishops of the church ; he declares that they had been made such by the Holy Ghost ; he assumes that they were answerable for the future purity and welfare of the church ; and he says not one word concerning Timothy, which is utterly unaccountable on the supposition that he was placed over them in the Lord, and they were bound to submit to his direction and control. What can we infer from these facts, but that Timothy's official connexion with the church at Ephesus had ceased ? He had laboured with the apostle there ; he had remained there for a particular purpose after the apostle had left ; that purpose he had fulfilled ; and had now resumed his itinerant ministry as an evangelist, sometimes in company with St. Paul, and at other times separated from him, just as the state of the church and the wants of the world might require.

At a subsequent period, we find Timothy not only unconnected with the church at Ephesus, but far distant from it. When St. Paul addressed to him his Second Epistle, this evangelist appears to have been, not at Ephesus, but at Troas, in Phrygia ; and the apostle urges him to come to Rome without delay. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me." "Do thy diligence to come before winter." "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee." (2 Tim. iv. 9, 13, 21.) The assumption, therefore, that Timothy was a diocesan bishop, permanently resident in Ephesus, is an idle dream, not only destitute of all just foundation, but directly at variance with the facts of Scripture history.

The same observations will apply to Titus ; who, it is alleged, was made bishop of Crete. He was left there

for a time, and for a particular purpose, just as Timothy was at Ephesus. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting,"—or, "left undone," as the marginal rendering is,—“and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.” (Titus i. 5.) Titus could not be the bishop of Crete, in the modern sense of that term; for, as we formerly observed, he was to appoint, not a bishop, but BISHOPS, in every city of the island, where there was a Christian church; so that, if he himself held any episcopal office there, he must have been an archbishop, as Dr. Campbell has observed. But the fact is, that archbishops were never appointed by the apostles of our blessed Lord; nor are they ever mentioned in ecclesiastical history till many ages after the death of Titus. When this faithful evangelist had finished his work in Crete, he left the island, as Timothy left Ephesus; for we learn from St. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy, which was written a short time before the apostle received the crown of martyrdom, that Titus had just been in Rome, and was “departed unto Dalmatia.” (2 Tim. iv. 10.) Titus was therefore an itinerant evangelist, and no more the diocesan bishop of Crete, than Timothy was the diocesan bishop of Ephesus.

IV. A fourth plea for diocesan episcopacy has been deduced from the manner in which our blessed Lord addressed the seven churches of Asia. He directed St. John to send an epistle to each of them in His name, commending in them that which was good, reproving what was amiss, accompanied by corresponding promises and threatenings. Preparatory to the writing of those epistles, St. John had a vision, in which he saw the Lord Jesus holding seven stars in His right hand.



These seven stars, he was informed, were "the angels of the seven churches;" (Rev. i. 16, 20;) that is, the symbols of those angels; and he was immediately taught, that through the medium of these angels the churches were to be severally addressed. Hence we read, in the second and third chapters of this book, "Unto the ANGEL of the church of Ephesus write;" "Unto the ANGEL of the church in Smyrna write;" "To the ANGEL of the church in Pergamos write;" "Unto the ANGEL of the church in Thyatira write;" "Unto the ANGEL of the church in Sardis write;" "To the ANGEL of the church in Philadelphia write;" "Unto the ANGEL of the church of the Laodiceans write."

The question then arises, In what sense is the term "angel" to be here understood? The advocates of diocesan episcopacy contend that it denotes an individual man, who was the head and representative of the church to which he belonged, and was to a great extent answerable for its character; for the epistles, although addressed to the "angels" of those churches, were evidently intended to give reproof, warning, or encouragement to the people who formed the churches, according to their respective characters. And who could that individual be, it is added, but the bishop of each church, who was invested with authority over the people, and over the ordinary pastors? The Revelation was written the last of the books of the New Testament, and, it is contended, shows the form of church-government which was finally adopted under apostolic sanction; and that form was clearly episcopal, since an individual is here addressed as the head and representative of each of the seven churches of Asia.

The answer is, that the term "angel," in the epistles to

the seven churches, as well as in other parts of this mysterious book, is to be symbolically understood ; and it is the decided judgment of some of our ablest divines that it is here used to denote the entire pastorate of the churches. It is evidently to be understood in this comprehensive sense in Rev. xiv. 6, where St. John says, " And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." It is not by the ministry of one man, but by a multitude, that the Gospel will be preached to all the tribes of the human race ; yet by one angel that multitude is symbolized. As to the import of the term " angel " in these epistles, Dr. Henry More says, " That by ' angels,' according to the apocalyptic style, all the agents under their presidency are represented, or insinuated, I have already noted : and it is so frequent and obvious in the Apocalypse, that none that is versed therein can anyways doubt of it. Wherefore Christ, in His writing to the angel of the church of Ephesus, in this mystical sense, must be understood to write to all the bishops, pastors, and Christians in this first apostolical interval of the church. And that particularly in this epistle to this church, (I mean in the mystical sense thereof,) He recommends Himself to them under the character of Him that holds the seven stars in His right hand, and who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks ; the sense stripped of this prophetic pomp is, that ' I am He that supports all My bishops and pastors, and all that labour for the interest of My kingdom, from this time forth and for ever. I am present with them, and uphold them.' " \*

\* More's Theological Works, p. 725. Edition of 1708.

The learned Daubuz expresses himself to the same effect. "It is to be observed," says he, "that the angel or bishop represents all those who are under his government; for, in Daniel x. 13, the prince or angel of Persia is put for the whole nation and monarchy; and in Daniel xii. 1, Michael, the angel of the Jewish church, is put for the whole nation of the Jews, whose protection was committed to him."\*

Other writers of high character have taken the same view of the angels of the seven churches, regarding them not as individual men, but as symbolizing bodies of officers in the church.† Indeed, the word "angels" is clearly to be understood in a figurative or symbolical sense; for angels, strictly speaking, are not the ministers of churches, regarded either as superintendents of other ministers, or as pastors of the flock. The advocates of episcopacy, who contend that these angels were individual men, answering to modern prelates, take it for granted that they were placed over the ordinary ministers by the appointment of Christ; and that they possessed the exclusive power of ordination and jurisdiction in the churches with which they were connected. But these are mere assumptions, which have never yet been proved. We will not, however, deny that by "the angel" of each of these churches is meant an individual man, answering to an officer who bore the same title in the Jewish synagogue; nor will we deny that he was placed at the head of the church with which he was connected, the other ministers, as well as the people, being in some sort subjected to him, so that he was to a certain extent held

\* Daubuz's "Perpetual Commentary on the Revelation," p. 110. Edition of 1740.

† See note M, at the end of the volume.

responsible for their conduct. This is Mr. Wesley's view of the subject, and also that of Dr. George Campbell, one of the ablest opponents of diocesan episcopacy that modern times have seen.\* But when these points are conceded, the Divine right of diocesan episcopacy does not necessarily follow : for,

1. The authority of these angels appears to have been only parochial, not diocesan. Every one of them is addressed as the angel of the church in the particular town or city where he resided, and not of an extensive district of country, including many distinct churches or congregations : for the fact is undeniable, that the term "church" is never used in Scripture to denote several congregations of Christian people, such as constitute a modern diocese. It signifies a particular congregation or Christian society ; and it signifies the whole body of the faithful. Hence we read of "the church of God which is at Corinth ;" (1 Cor. i. 2 ;) of "the church of the Thessalonians ;" (1 Thess. i. 1 ;) and of "the church" that was in the house of Philemon ; (Phil. 2 ;) of "the church that was at Antioch ;" (Acts xiii. 1 ;) and of "the church which was at Jerusalem." (Acts viii. 1.) Here the word "church" is used to denote the distinct and separate societies of believers in Christ who were resident in those particular places, and assembled there for religious purposes. In the following texts the word denotes the entire body of believers scattered over the face of the earth, and distinguished from the unregenerate world. "Christ is the Head of the church ;" "The church is subject unto Christ ;" "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it ;" "Upon this rock I will build My church." (Eph. v. 23, 24, 25 ; Matt.

\* See note N, at the end of the volume.

xvi. 18.) The word is always used by the sacred writers in one or the other of these two senses ; but never to denote any definite number of churches in any particular district. When mention is made of any such number of churches, they are never called “a church,” but always “churches ;” as, “the churches of Galatia ;” (Gal. i. 2 ;) “the churches of Judæa ;” (Gal. i. 22 ;) “So ordain I in all churches ;” (1 Cor. vii. 17 ;) “And so were the churches established.” (Acts xvi. 5.)

This is the current language of Holy Scripture. The entire body of believers is the church ; a particular congregation, or society of believers, in any given place, is a church, or the church in that place ; several societies, or congregations of believers, in any particular neighbourhood or country, are never called “a church,” but always “churches,” in the plural. When we read, therefore, of “the angel of the church of Ephesus,” of “the angel of the church in Smyrna,” of “the angel of the church in Thyatira,” &c., supposing that the term “angel” signifies bishop, or superintendent, we can understand no more by it than the bishop or the superintendent who had the charge of the church at Ephesus, of the church at Smyrna, of the church at Thyatira, and so of the rest ; and not a bishop or superintendent who had the oversight and control of several churches, with their respective ministers. If, therefore, episcopacy be really recognised as existing in the seven churches of Asia, and as being vested in one individual man, it is nothing more than parochial episcopacy ; an episcopacy exercised over one church or congregation of Christians, and not diocesan episcopacy. To parochial episcopacy, properly explained, Presbyterians offer no objection ; as we shall, ere long, have occasion to show.



2. Granting that the angels of the seven churches in Asia were the bishops of those churches, exercising authority over them, and over all the other ministers, there is no proof that they were any more than what are called, *primi inter pares*: not men of a distinct order, superior to presbyters, but simply the first among equals, like the Speaker of the House of Commons, or the foreman of a jury; or like a rector among his curates, in an English parish; or a superintendent preacher among his colleagues, in a Methodist Circuit: one being placed over the rest, as matter of voluntary arrangement, that they might all act by united counsel, and the more efficiently discharge their several duties. The theory of modern episcopacy is, that a bishop belongs to an order superior to that of presbyters; and that he is raised to that superior order by a distinct and specific ordination; an ordination that invests him with powers which, as a mere presbyter, he did not possess; and that this is the order of God, established by apostolic authority, and binding upon the universal church through all time.

But even supposing the angels of the seven churches to have exercised a ruling power over the other ministers with whom they were associated, where is the proof that they had received that power by a separate ordination, additional to that which they received when they were appointed to the pastoral office? The New Testament supplies no proof at all; and the Episcopalian has nothing to rely upon in support of his lofty claims but assumption and conjecture. He *assumes* that the angel of each of the seven churches of Asia possessed by Divine right a ruling authority over his ministerial brethren, and over other ministers, through a consider-

able extent of country, called a diocese. He *assumes* that every one of them had been thus placed over his brethren by a distinct ordination, conferring upon him powers which, as a mere presbyter, he did not possess. There are men who speak on this subject with as much confidence as they speak of the being of a God, or the immortality of the soul ; and when we ask for proof, we are met with bold assertion, hard names, and a threat of perdition. The fact, however, is, whatever men may say on the subject, that the Divine right of diocesan episcopacy has never yet been proved from Holy Scripture. For, granting that the angels of the seven churches were individual men, standing at the head of their brethren in the ministry, and responsible for the purity of the churches with which they were connected, there is no proof that they were raised to an order above that of presbyters by any distinct ordination ; there is no proof that the government of the people and of the other ministers was confided exclusively to them ; and much less is there any proof that they only possessed the right of ordaining men to the holy ministry. They might represent the entire pastorate with which they were connected, and be held responsible for the purity of their several churches, and thus be stars in the right hand of Christ, and yet, as ministers and pastors, be nothing more than the first among equals. It is, indeed, utterly incredible that the churches in Ephesus, in Philippi, in Crete, and throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, should have been severally committed to the pastoral care of presbyter-bishops, under the direct appointment of St. Peter and St. Paul ; and that afterwards an entirely new form of organization should have been introduced into the seven

churches of the Apocalypse. The apostles of our Lord, to whom the formation of churches was confided, acted not by divided counsels, but according to the wisdom that was given them from above; and we cannot conceive of that wisdom as teaching them at one time to place the care of the church in the hands of a body of presbyters, and at another time to place it in the hands of a single prelate. If the government of the church in the age of the apostles were changed by Divine appointment from Presbyterian to Episcopal, then all the men at Ephesus, whom the Holy Ghost had made bishops, (Acts xx. 28,) with the exception of one, must by the same authority have been degraded afterwards to the rank of mere presbyters. Can such mutability of counsel and purpose be imputed to Him?

Within the last few years, the ears of the people of England have been stunned with the noise of an alleged APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION. Certain ministers, it is said, are in that succession, and others are not. Those who are in it, we are told, are the true ministers of the Lord Jesus, even when their doctrine is erroneous and their morals are corrupt; and the men who are not in this succession, whatever may be their character and qualifications, should they undertake to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments, are intruders into the sacred office, so that their ministrations are sinful, and therefore unsanctioned and unblessed by the Lord. The ministers who are in the succession, we are further told, are those who have received their appointments from diocesan bishops, who are said to have existed, as a distinct and peculiar order, in a regular and unbroken line, from the time of the apostles, from whom their peculiar powers were in the first instance derived; the

apostles being the medium of communication from Christ, as the Supreme Head of the church. To this theory we object,—

1. That many of the men who have been called “bishops,” and through whom the apostolical commission is said to have been transmitted, were among the most profligate and wicked of human beings. Judging of them, therefore, by “their fruits,” as our blessed Lord directs, they were no more the true ministers of Christ than they were archangels; and so far was our blessed Lord from holding up such men to the public confidence as His ministers, that He calls them “wolves in sheep’s clothing,” and charges His disciples to “beware” of them. (Matt. vii. 15.)

2. We object that no man can prove the fact of regular and valid ordination in the case of all the bishops through whom this apostolical authority is alleged to have been received. Has every man that has borne the name of a bishop, since the apostolic times, had three distinct ordinations; first as a deacon, then as a presbyter, then as a bishop; so as to impress upon him a distinct and peculiar character, which as a presbyter he did not possess, and so as to elevate him above those two orders? If a single ordination in the entire line, extending through eighteen hundred years, has been irregular and invalid, that one ordination, upon the principles of the high Episcopalians, vitiates every ordination that has followed in the same line; so that the chain is broken, and the succession is cut off. Now where is the proof that every ordination that claims to be episcopal, through the lapse of eighteen centuries, including periods of unexampled ignorance and wickedness, has been regular and valid, and in accordance

with apostolic precedent? Bold men may assume this, and utter great swelling words in reference to it; but they can no more prove the point which they assume than they can give life and intelligence to the shadows which follow them in a moonlight night.\*

3. But we object to this theory mainly because it is destitute of apostolic sanction. We receive the apostles as the accredited servants of Christ. They were His plenipotentiaries, fully authorised to act in His name; so that he who rejects their authority does, in fact, reject the authority of the Lord Himself. If the apostles instituted diocesan episcopacy, as a perpetual ordinance of God; if they ordained, or commanded to be ordained, men above the order of presbyters, and invested them with an exclusive power to ordain and govern presbyters through all time; let this apostolic act, or this apostolic command, be produced. Where is it written? When and where was the act performed? Where was the command given? To whom was it addressed? We have read the Holy Scriptures, those inspired records of the mind of God; and we find there no such act recorded, and no such command given. The apostles themselves ordained elders, or presbyters, having both the name and the power of bishops, and they directed their helpers, the evangelists, to do the same; but that either the apostles or evangelists ordained bishops as an order of men superior to presbyters, we have no proof whatever in the New Testament. Presbyter-bishops we acknowledge, as the ordinary ministers of Christ, appointed by apostles acting in His name, and by His authority; but diocesan bishops, belonging to an order superior to presbyters, and possess-

\* See Note O, at the end of the volume.



ing the exclusive right of ordination and jurisdiction in the church, we do not acknowledge, because we find no such order of men mentioned in Holy Scripture.

Here, then, we take our stand against the claims of high Episcopalians of every class, whether they belong to the Church of Rome, or to the Church of England. If they could prove that every ordination in their line of succession, from the earliest times, has been perfectly regular and canonical, they cannot substantiate their claim, because their theory is merely human. They have never produced in its behalf apostolical sanction and authority. Supposing their chain of episcopal succession to be ever so perfect, unless the hand of an apostle grasp the first link, it is merely an *episcopal* succession, and is *apostolical* in nothing but in name. That the apostles ordained presbyter-bishops, we know, and that these presbyter-bishops were made such by the Holy Ghost; but that they ordained bishops of any other order, we know not. Ordination to the ministry by the hands of a presbyter-bishop we should therefore regard as more strictly conformable to the apostolic rule and order than any other ordination whatever. The doctrine of apostolic succession, upon the principles of high episcopacy, is nothing more than an *assumption* upon the *designs of Christ*, an *assumption* upon *apostolical acts*, and an *assumption* upon the *facts of history*. Mr. Wesley therefore spoke the language of sobriety and truth when he said, in a letter to his brother Charles, "I firmly believe, I am a SCRIPTURAL ἐπίσκοπος," ("bishop,") "as much as any man in England, or in Europe. For the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove." \*

\* Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 220. Octavo edition. Baxter.

If the modern doctrine of apostolical succession be true, it is the first duty of every clergyman, on his appointment to a cure of souls, to lay before his people clear and decisive evidence that he has derived his ministerial authority from one of the apostles, Peter, James, Paul, or John, as the case may be, in a direct line from age to age. It is his duty to give the names of all the ordainers, in the entire series, extending through eighteen centuries, with the exact form of ordination in every case. If he cannot do this, what satisfaction have they, upon the principle of a strict personal succession, that he is not an intruder into the sacred office, and that all his ministrations in the pulpit, at the Lord's table, and at the sacred font, are unauthorised and unblest? Suppose a congregation to hear from their clergyman these high claims, and then to demand from him the requisite proof of what he affirms with respect to himself, and refuse to attend his ministrations till that proof is produced; what could he answer? He could no more trace his ecclesiastical pedigree to an apostle than he could trace the pedigree of his family to some distinguished man that lived in the time of Herod the Great.

“If men must refuse the government and sacraments

reports the following conversation as having taken place between Oliver Cromwell and an episcopal clergyman, who was afterwards raised to the prelacy:—“‘Doctor, how know you that you are a true minister of Christ?’ who answered, ‘Because I have received ordination by an uninterrupted successive conveyance from true bishops from the apostles.’ Saith he, ‘Are you sure they were all true bishops, and the succession uninterrupted?’ Doctor, will you take your oath that you are thus a true minister?’ at which he stuck. ‘Come, come, doctor,’ saith he, ‘there is a surer and nearer way.’”—Baxter’s “Second Defence of the Nonconformists,” p. 124. Edition of 1681.

of all bishops and presbyters that do not prove to them a regular ordination uninterrupted for sixteen hundred years, all the ministry on earth may be refused, and none for so doing should be called schismatics. I never yet heard or saw a bishop prove such a succession, nor ever knew one that would take his oath on it that he was a true bishop on such terms." \*

"No man ever did to this day demonstrate such a succession for the proof of his ministry. Nor can all our importunity prevail with Papists, Italians or French, to give us such a proof. It is a thing impossible for any man now alive to prove the regular ordination of all his predecessors to the apostles' days; yea, or any ordination at all. How can you tell that he that ordained you did not counterfeit himself to be ordained? or, at least, that he was not ordained by an unordained man? or that his predecessors were not so? It is a mere impossibility for us to know any such thing. We have no evidence to prove it." †

\* Baxter's "Answer to Mr. Dodwell and Dr. Sherlock," preface. Edition of 1682.

† Baxter's "Five Disputations of Church Government," p. 169. Edition of 1659.

## X.—THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

So loud is the clamour which has been raised in favour of episcopacy by Divine right, and so vehemently has it been asserted that every other form of church-government is absolutely unlawful, that it may be expedient to adduce a few testimonies in support of the view we have given of the equality of bishops and presbyters in the churches which the apostles founded. Testimonies to this effect it would be easy to produce from Presbyterian writers, to an indefinite extent ; but we will summon as our witnesses clergymen of the Church of England, of high scholarship and of undoubted candour.

Our first testimony shall be that of

DEAN FIELD,

who lived in the time of Elizabeth and of James the First, and whose book “Of the Church” proves him to have been one of the greatest divines of his age. He says,—

“The power of ecclesiastical or sacred order—that is, the power and authority to intermeddle with things pertaining to the service of God, and to perform eminent acts of gracious efficacy, tending to the procuring of the eternal good of the sons of men—is equal and the same

in all those whom we call presbyters, that is, fatherly guides of God's church and people : and that, only for order sake, and the preservation of peace, there is a limitation of the use and exercise of the same. Hereunto agree all the best learned amongst the Romanists themselves, freely confessing that wherein a bishop excelleth a presbyter, is not a distinct and higher order, or power of order, but a kind of dignity and office or employment only, which they prove, because a presbyter ordained *per saltum*, that never was consecrated or ordained deacon, may, notwithstanding, do all those acts that pertain to the deacon's order, because the higher order doth always imply in it the lower and inferior, in an eminent and excellent sort : but a bishop ordained *per saltum*, that never had the ordination of a presbyter, can neither consecrate and administer the sacrament of the Lord's body ; nor ordain a presbyter, himself being none ; nor do any act peculiarly pertaining to presbyters. Whereby it is most evident, that that wherein a bishop excelleth a presbyter, is not a distinct power of order, but an eminence and dignity only, specially yielded to one above all the rest of the same rank, for order sake, and to preserve the unity and peace of the church."\*

Our second testimony shall be that of the

REV. GEORGE LAWSON,

rector of More, in Shropshire, during the latter part of the seventeenth century, and one of the ablest divines of that eventful age. He says,—

\* Field "Of the Church," vol. i., pp. 321, 322. Edition of 1847.



“A presbyter, in the New Testament, is a bishop. For the elders of Ephesus were made by the Holy Ghost bishops or superintendents over God’s flock ; (Acts xx. 28 ;) and the qualification of a bishop (1 Tim. iii. 1–3, &c.) is the qualification of an elder. (Titus i. 5–7, &c.) For, whatsoever some of late have said to the contrary, yet presbyter and bishop were only two different words signifying the same officer : and this is confessed by divers of the ancients, who tell us that the word ‘bishop’ was appropriated to one who was more than a presbyter in after-times.”\*

“I think a constant superintendent, trusted with an inspection, not only over the people, but the presbyters, within a reasonable precinct, if he be duly qualified and rightly chosen, may be lawful, and the place” (office) “agreeable to Scripture ; yet I do not conceive that this kind of episcopacy is grounded upon any Divine special precept of universal obligation, making it necessary for the being of a church, or essential constitution of presbyters. Neither is there any scripture which determines the form how such a bishop, or any other, may be made. Yet it may be grounded upon general precepts of Scripture concerning decency, unity, order, and edification ; but so that order and decency may be observed any other way, and unity and edification obtained by other means. But there are many in these our days which make episcopacy, invested with the power of ordination, at least, of that necessity, that if ministers be not ordained by them, they are no ministers. They make the being of the ministry, and the power of the sacraments, to depend on them ; and they further add, that

\* “Model of Civil and Ecclesiastical Government,” p. 215. Edition of 1689.

without a succession of these bishops we cannot maintain our ministry against the Church of Rome. But,

“1. Where do we find in Scripture any special precept, of universal and perpetual obligation, which doth determine that the imposition of hands of the presbytery doth essentially constitute a presbyter; and that the imposition of hands, if it did so, was invalid without an hierarchical bishop, or a certain constant superintendent with them? And if they will have their doctrine to stand good, such a precept they must produce; which they have not done; which I am confident they cannot do.

“2. As for succession of such bishops, after so long time, so many persecutions, and so great alterations in the churches of all nations, it is impossible to make it clear. Eusebius himself doth so preface unto his catalogue of bishops, that no rational man can so much as yield a probable assent unto him in that particular. But suppose it had been far clearer, yet it could not merit the force of a Divine testimony. It would have been only human, and could not have been believed but with a probable faith. Nay, Irenæus, Tertullian, Eusebius, and others, do not agree in the first and immediate successors of the apostles, no, not of the Romish Church. For Irenæus makes Clement the third, whom Tertullian determines to be the first from the apostles. Yet they all agree in this, that the succession of PERSONS, without the succession of the same DOCTRINE, was nothing. Tertullian confesseth that there were many churches which could not show the succession of persons, but of doctrine, from the apostles; and that was sufficient.

“And the succession of persons is so uncertain, that whosoever shall make either the being of a church, or

the ministry, or the power of the sacraments, depend upon it, shall so offend Christ's little ones, and be guilty of such a scandal, as it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea. The power of saving men's souls depends not upon succession of persons, according to human institutions, but upon the apostolical doctrine, accompanied by the Divine Spirit. If, upon the exercise of their ministerial power, men are converted, find comfort in their doctrine and the sacraments, and in their end deliver up their souls unto God their Redeemer, and that with unspeakable joy; this is a Divine confirmation of their ministry; and the same more real and manifest than any personal succession.

“To maintain the ministry of England from their ordination by bishops, and the bishops by their consecration according to the canons of the Council of Carthage, was a good argument *ad hominem*; yet it should be made good (as it may be) by far better arguments, and such as will serve the interest of other Protestant and Reformed churches, who have sufficiently proved their ministry legal, and by experience, through God's blessing upon their labours, have found it effectual.

“But suppose our English episcopacy could be made good since the Reformation, it is to little purpose, except you can justify the Popish succession up to the time of the apostles; which few will undertake, none, I fear, will perform. Divers reasons persuade me to believe they cannot do anything in this particular to purpose; but, amongst the rest, this doth much sway with me, that there can be no succession without some distinct and determinate form of consecration and ordination;

and except this form be determined by special precept of Scripture, it cannot be of Divine obligation. But any such special precept, which should prescribe the distinct forms of consecration and ordination, we find not at all. We have some examples of constituting church-officers by election, with the imposition of hands and prayer : yet this was common to all, even to deacons : so that the very forms of making bishops and presbyters, as we find them both in the English book of ordination, and the Pontifical of Rome, are merely arbitrary, as having no particular ground, but, at the best, only a general rule in Scripture, which leaves liberty for several distinct forms. If any, notwithstanding all this, out of a high conceit of episcopacy, will refuse communion with such churches which have no bishops, and yet are orthodox, or will account those no ministers who are ordained by presbyters without a bishop, let such take heed lest they prove guilty of schisms. The substance of all is this : That bishops are not the primary subject of the power of the keys.”\*

The third witness that we will cite is

BISHOP STILLINGFLEET,

who was partly contemporary with Lawson, and whose scholarship in theology and in ecclesiastical affairs has been seldom surpassed. He says,

“ In the first primitive church the presbyters all acted in common for the welfare of the church, and either did or might ordain others to the same authority with them-

\* “ Model of Civil and Ecclesiastical Government,” pp. 234-238.

selves ; because the intrinsical power of order is equally in them and in those who were after appointed governors over presbyteries. And the collocation of orders doth come from the power of order, and not merely from the power of jurisdiction ; it being likewise fully acknowledged by the schoolmen, that bishops are not superior over presbyters as to the power of order.”\*

On the subject of the succession the learned prelate speaks with equal explicitness. “At Antioch some, as Origen and Eusebius, make Ignatius to succeed Peter. Jerome makes him the third bishop, and placeth Evodius before him. Others, therefore, to solve that, make them contemporary bishops ; the one of the church of the Jews, and the other of the Gentiles : with what congruity to their hypothesis of a single bishop and deacons placed in every city, I know not.

“Come we therefore to Rome ; and here the succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself ; for here Tertullian, Rufinus, and several other, place Clement next to Peter. Irenæus and Eusebius set Anacletus before him. Epiphanius and Optatus, both Anacletus and Cletus ; Augustinus and Damasus, with others, make Anacletus, Cletus, and Linus, all to precede him. What way shall we find to extricate ourselves out of this labyrinth, so as to reconcile it with the certainty of the forms of government in the apostles’ times ? Certainly if the **LINE OF SUCCESSION** fail us here, when we most need it, we have little cause to pin our faith upon it as to the certainty of any particular form of church-government settled in the apostles’ times, which can be drawn from the help of the records of the primitive church : which must be first cleared of all defectiveness, ambiguity,

\* “*Irenicum*,” p. 273. Second edition, 1662.



partiality, and confusion, before the thing we inquire for can be extracted out of them." \*

Stillingfleet, who wrote his "Irenicum" when he was a parochial clergyman, was afterwards raised to the episcopal bench, and then assumed a different tone, writing against the Nonconformists of his time in a harsh and intolerant spirit, by which he subjected himself to the just animadversions of Baxter and others. The fact, however, is, that after this change in his spirit and rank he never refuted the doctrines of the very able and elaborate work which he wrote in comparatively humble life for the laudable purpose of promoting union and forbearance among his Christian contemporaries.

Our fourth witness shall be

JOHN EDWARDS, D.D.,

a learned member of the University of Cambridge, and Fellow of St. John's College. He was a very voluminous writer, and flourished at the close of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth. He says, "That the names 'bishops and presbyters,' or 'elders,' are attributed to the same ecclesiastical persons, will sufficiently appear from the following texts, which I will set down in the same order that they occur in Scripture. The first remarkable place is Acts xx. 17: 'From Miletus he' (that is, Paul) 'sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church:' and in the verses immediately following he sets himself before them as a pattern of the pastoral care, zeal, integrity, industry, and faithfulness, and then commits the flock of God to them in

\* "Irenicum," pp. 321, 322. Second edition, 1662.

these words, verse 28th: 'Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.' Where we plainly see that those ministers of the Gospel, whom he calls 'elders,' or 'presbyters,' of the church of Ephesus, he afterwards calls 'bishops;' for so it is according to the Greek word, though our translators render it otherwise, namely, 'overseers.' And perhaps they might do it designedly, that it might not be perceived the presbyters, or elders, are the same with bishops. But so it is; and it is impossible to evade the force of these texts thus compared together; especially if we observe that it is said here in general, without reserve or limitation, that the apostle called together the elders of the church of Ephesus; that is, all the elders, the whole body of the clergy; and he styles all of them 'bishops.' He lets them know that one of them is as much a bishop, or overseer, as another.

"It is undeniable, that if there had been one bishop, or overseer, over the rest, he would not have called them all *ἐπισκόπους*, in the plural. Wherefore we may solidly infer that there was no single bishop in that church; none that had pre-eminence and authority above the rest of the ministers, and was of a distinct order from them. St. Paul makes no difference between them in his charge he gives them here, but bids every one of them take heed to all the flock. Whereas, if there had been one above the others, the apostle most certainly would not have spoken thus. And further, they are all of them to '*feed* the church of God;' which is a general word, and comprehends the whole of the pastoral office; not only praying and preaching, but ruling and governing.

And it is observable that the apostle expressly saith, the Holy Ghost hath made these presbyters to be bishops, or overseers of the church of God : *ἐθετο*, He ‘hath constituted and appointed’ them. This equality of ecclesiastical officers is of Divine institution. Here is our pattern ; and it is according to the direction of the Holy Ghost Himself.” \*

Our fifth witness shall be

DR. FREDERICK NOLAN,

one of the most learned of the English clergy in the present age. This very able man says, “ I have already observed, on the authority of Bishop Burnet, that in the time of the Reformation the notion of any difference in order between bishops and presbyters was generally rejected. That in this conclusion Archbishop Cranmer, the highest and most influential of the divines by whom the Reformation was effected, fully acquiesced, the following ‘opinion and sentence,’ formally delivered under his hand and seal, will sufficiently attest : ‘The bishops and priests were at one time, and were not two things, but both one office, in the beginning of Christ’s religion.’ In strict conformity with this distinction, the Articles drawn up under his authority, and ratified by his subscription, discriminate between the *orders* of the clergy, and the *degrees* of the hierarchy ; and, in an oblique reference to the civil authority, more than insinuate that neither exclusively emanate from the episcopal. ‘The book of consecration of archbishops and bishops, and

\* “Remains of the late Reverend and Learned John Edwards, D.D.,” pp. 157, 158. Edition of 1731.

*ordering* of priests and deacons, lately set forth in the times of Edward the Sixth, and *confirmed* at the time by authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such *consecration* and *ordering*.' In justification of the preceding distinction, it may be observed that it was acknowledged by two of the most learned persons whom these countries have produced, and the most competent to pass a decision upon the present subject. The incomparably learned Selden, and his friend, Archbishop Ussher, have equally pronounced that the difference between bishops and presbyters is merely that of rank or degree; that, in fact, according to what is implied in our Articles, which exists between archbishops and bishops, whom no one supposes to be distinguished in *order*.

"After having expressed myself at large on the discipline of the church, it cannot be necessary to enter into any length of proof that the Reformers were correct in their judgment on this subject; and that their theological successors who have had the conceit to fancy they could improve upon their views have ridiculously overrated their own powers." \*

The sixth witness that we will adduce is the

REV. H. H. MILMAN, DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S,

whose deep and extensive researches in ecclesiastical history no one will dispute. His testimony is the more valuable because it is reluctantly given; for he has laboured hard to invest the episcopal form of church-government, as it is now practised, with apostolic autho-

\* Nolan's "Catholic Character of Christianity," pp. 212, 217. Edition of 1839.

riety. All that he has advanced upon this subject, however, he confesses, amounts to nothing more than a bare probability. He says, "The earliest Christian communities appear to have been ruled and represented, in the absence of the apostle who was their first founder, by their elders, who are likewise called 'bishops,' or 'overseers,' of the churches. These presbyter-bishops and the deacons are the only two orders which we discover at first in the church of Ephesus, at Philippi, and perhaps in Crete." \*

After a laboured attempt to prove that episcopacy, in the modern and popular sense, nevertheless existed in the time of the apostles, and was probably instituted by them, this very able writer, in fact, gives up the cause, by adding, "Thus, while we are *inclined* to consider the succession of bishops from the apostolic times to be undeniable, *the nature and extent of authority which they derived from the apostles is altogether uncertain.*" †

Dr. Milman, then, thinks that the apostles certainly instituted episcopacy in the church;—a fact of which, indeed, no room is left for doubt;—but what that episcopacy was, he thinks no one can by possibility ascertain. Our old writers would call this view of the subject "a merrie conceit." The apostles instituted episcopacy in the church: but whether it was diocesan episcopacy, or parochial episcopacy; whether it was an episcopacy in which the bishop was merely the first among equals, a mere presbyter-bishop, or was raised to a distinct and peculiar order above his brethren of the presbytery;—in other words, whether the apostles instituted the episcopacy of High Churchmen, or the episco-

\* "History of Christianity," vol. i., p. 64. Edition of 1840.

† *Ibid.*, p. 72.



pacy which Presbyterianism acknowledges ;—according to Dr. Milman, no man can declare. He thus gives up his cause altogether : for that which cannot be known cannot by possibility be a matter of Divine obligation. If the apostles really ordained bishops in the church, as a distinct and peculiar order, above presbyters, as Dr. Milman is “inclined” to believe, and yet did not define their powers and duties, the claim of modern prelacy to the exclusive right of ordination and government is altogether unsupported by scriptural evidence, and can therefore be regarded in no other light than that of voluntary arrangement on the part of ministers and churches.

With all submission to this learned writer, the episcopacy which the apostles instituted and sanctioned is not involved in any profound mystery. It consisted simply in the pastoral oversight of particular churches ; and the men who were intrusted with this oversight were elders, or presbyters ; the ordinary ministers of Christ, who were appointed to teach the people, and to maintain among them a holy and salutary discipline, in subordination to Christ, who is the supreme “Shepherd and Bishop of souls.”

THE REV. J. B. LIGHTFOOT, D.D.,

Hulsean Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge; has made the following candid statement on this subject :—

“Of the identity of the bishop and presbyter in the language of the apostolic age, the following evidence seems conclusive :—

“1. In the opening of this Epistle” (that to the

Philippians) “St. Paul salutes the bishops and deacons. Now, it is incredible that he should recognise only the first and third order, and pass over the second, though the second was absolutely essential to the existence of a church, and formed the staple of its ministry. It seems, therefore, to follow of necessity that the bishops are identified with the presbyters.

“2. In the Acts (xx. 17) St. Paul is represented as summoning to Miletus the elders or presbyters of the church of Ephesus. Yet, in addressing them immediately after, he appeals to them as bishops or overseers of the church. (xx. 28.)

“3. Similarly St. Peter, appealing to the presbyters of the churches addressed by him, in the same breath urges them to fulfil the office of bishops (ἐπισκοποῦντες) with disinterested zeal. (1 Peter v. 1, 2.)

“4. Again, in the First Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul, after describing the qualifications for the office of a bishop, (iii. 1–7,) goes on at once to say what is required of deacons. (iii. 8–13.) He makes no mention of presbyters. The term ‘presbyter,’ however, is not unknown to him; for, having occasion in a later passage to speak of Christian ministers, he calls these officers no longer ‘bishops,’ but ‘presbyters.’ (v. 17–19.)

“5. The same identification appears still more plainly from the apostle’s directions to Titus: (i. 5–7 :) ‘That thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain *elders* in every city, as I appointed thee; if any man be *blameless*, the husband of one wife, having believing children, who are not charged with riotousness or unruly; for a *bishop* (τὸν ἐπίσκοπον) must be *blameless*,’ &c.

“6. Nor is it only in the apostolic writings that this identity is found. St. Clement of Rome wrote, probably, in the last decade of the first century; and in his language the terms are still convertible. Speaking of the apostles, he says that, ‘preaching in every country and city, they appointed their first-fruits, having tested them by the Spirit, to be *bishops* and *deacons* of them that should believe,’ &c.

“‘This is the last instance of identification. With the opening of the second century a new phraseology begins.’”\*

We might greatly increase our list of testimonies to the same effect, from the writings of Episcopal divines of equal rank and scholarship, such as the martyred Cranmer, Archbishop Ussher, Bishop Burnet, &c.; but our limits forbid. The fact is, that the equality of bishops and presbyters was so far acknowledged among our Reformers, that the Presbyterian communities on the Continent were regarded as true churches, and their ordinations valid, so that for several years their ministers were allowed to officiate in the Church of England. At length other principles were asserted, and the Reformed churches of France, and Switzerland, and Holland, and Scotland, and Germany, were hardly allowed to be Christians, the Papal spirit infecting men who bore and dishonoured the name of Protestant.

We do not proceed far in our examination of the records of the church before we meet with a direct departure from the order which we have just described, and observe a discrepancy between the phraseology of

\* “St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians. A Revised Text, with Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations.” 1868.

Scripture, and the phraseology of ecclesiastical writers. We find, for instance, a distinction drawn between bishops and presbyters. Bishops are placed before us as possessed of a ruling power; and presbyters are spoken of as being subject to this power, as well as the people. They are not so directly employed in the government of the church, as they were heretofore, but rather in the administration of the sacred ordinances, under the bishop's direction. We naturally inquire how this change was effected; or how it was that in the several churches one minister of Christ came to be placed over his brethren, as well as over the people, and was denominated, not **A** bishop, in communion with his fellow-pastors of the flock, but **THE** bishop, as the overseer and superintendent of the whole. To this question we answer,—

1. This arrangement, we apprehend, was voluntarily made, for the sake of convenience. The government of each church was, as we have seen, originally vested in a body of bishops or elders. Such is the order that was established in the church at Ephesus, and in the church at Philippi; and Titus was directed to institute the same order in the several churches of Crete. In 1 Tim. iv. 14 we have an example of a body of pastors, thus constituted, acting in concert, and in their official and corporate capacity. “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” The word which the apostle here uses is *πρεσβυτέριον*, which occurs only three times in the New Testament, and in each place denotes a body or council of elders. It is used in reference to the Jewish senate or sanhedrim, (Luke xxii. 66,) where our translators have rendered it, “the elders of

the people." It bears the same signification Acts xxii. 5, where it is rendered, "the estate of the elders." The Jewish nation had its *πρεσβυτέριον*, or body of elders, who were authorised to act, not separately, but unitedly, and in concert, in behalf of the people. In like manner, every Christian church that the apostles organized, or that was organized by evangelists, under apostolic direction, had its own *πρεσβυτέριον*, or council of elders, by whom its affairs were regulated and controlled; and one of these presbyteries, or bodies of Christian elders, was concerned with St. Paul in the official appointment of Timothy to his ministerial work.

Now, when the elders who were placed over the several churches of Christ met to deliberate on the affairs of their several charges, it was requisite that they should have a president, or chairman, to direct their proceedings, so that their business might be transacted with regularity and dispatch. It is also reasonable to suppose that the man who was chosen by his brethren to preside over their councils would be requested to carry their plans and purposes into practical effect, and would therefore take the lead in the actual management of the church's affairs. As the members of each presbytery were to act, not on their individual responsibility, but simultaneously, and by united counsel, so that the peace of the church should be sacredly preserved, it was a matter of great convenience that one of their own body should be selected as their representative, and the depository of their plans and regulations, who should direct the general movements of the church in the name of his brother presbyters.

2. A second direct cause of this kind of episcopacy in the early Christian church was doubtless the respect



which is naturally secured by age, talent, and piety, especially among devout and right-minded people. The mental characters of men are as various as their countenances and their temporal condition; so that some greatly excel others in acuteness and energy. They are wise in council, firm in the endurance of opposition, and resolute in action. When these rare and valuable endowments are found in connexion with age, experience, piety, and uprightness, they mark their possessors as born for government, and providentially designed to exert a controlling and directing influence upon the less gifted of their brethren. As learning excels ignorance; courage, timidity; strength, weakness; so it must ever happen, in the nature of things, that those men who surpass others in these qualifications will have the pre-eminence. This is the order of God, and it is vain to attempt to reverse it. For many ages Christianity was a persecuted religion; and the man who stood forward in any particular church as the conductor of its religious services, and the leader of his brethren, was usually the first victim that was marked out for slaughter by heathen persecutors. The office of a bishop, therefore, was rather a post of danger than of ambition; yet were there men found who shrunk not from the task of leading forward the servants of Christ, in compliance with the request of their brethren, and in obedience to the call of God, which His providence indicated.\*

In this manner, it is conceived, the episcopal form of church-government took its rise. There is no proof whatever that it was directly instituted by the apostles, and much less that it is universally binding upon Christian people. It would appear that it is rather an eccle-

\* See Note P, at the end of the volume.

siastical arrangement, voluntarily formed, in the first instance, by presbyteries and churches for the sake of order and convenience, and may therefore be modified from time to time, or even laid aside, according to providential circumstances and the exigencies of God's work in the salvation of men. It is clear that, after episcopacy had been introduced, the bishop was nothing more than an humble presbyter, placed at the head of his brethren; and his authority extended not beyond the limits of his own congregation, to which he and his fellow-labourers were accustomed to minister the word of life. Ages passed away before the bishop was generally elevated into a diocesan prelate. Bishop Ignatius, for instance, in the beginning of the second century, writing to his friend, bishop Polycarp, admonishes him to be the guardian of the widows, and to know the names of the persons forming his congregation, even the names of the men and women servants; clearly implying that the episcopacy of Polycarp was parochial, and not diocesan: for how can a modern prelate know the names of all the widows and the servants that are comprehended in his diocese? \*

Such a parochial episcopacy as that which we have just described many wise and good men have thought

\* "Let not the widows be neglected: on our Lord's account do thou be their guardian, and let nothing be done without thy will: neither do thou do anything without the will of God; nor, indeed, doest thou. Stand well. Let the assemblies be continual: require every man by his name. Despise not the slaves, male and female; but neither let them be contemptuous; but as for the glory of God, let them labour more abundantly, that they may be meet for that more excellent liberty which is of God. Let them not desire to be set at liberty from that which is common, that they may not be found the slaves of lusts."—Cureton's "*Epistles of St. Ignatius*," p. 7. Edition of 1845.

was introduced into the church in the apostolic times ; and they suppose that the angels of the seven churches of Asia were presbyter-bishops of this class, being first among equals. To this opinion we strongly incline, although the subject is incapable of direct proof ; and some men of great name are of an opposite judgment.

And now having assigned what we conceive to be the true origin of episcopacy in the church, it may be asked whether any ancient testimony can be adduced in confirmation of the view we have taken. The answer is, that we have the testimony of St. Jerome, an authority of the greatest weight : for he is universally acknowledged to have been one of the most able and learned of all the Latin fathers. He was especially eminent for his attainments in biblical scholarship ; and as he travelled extensively, he had opportunities, above almost any other man of his times, for obtaining information upon ecclesiastical theories and usages. He is well known to have flourished in the fourth century. He was ordained a presbyter at Antioch ; he lived some years in the Holy Land, having previously visited Constantinople and Rome. In his Annotations on the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to Titus, he gives the following account of the nature and origin of the episcopal office :—

“ A presbyter is the same as a bishop. And until, by the instigation of the devil, there arose divisions in religion, and it was said among the people, ‘ I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,’ churches were governed by a common council of presbyters. But afterwards, when every one regarded those whom he had baptized as belonging to himself rather than to

Christ, it was everywhere decreed that one person, elected from the presbyters, should be placed over the others; to whom the care of the whole church might belong, and thus the seeds of division might be taken away. Should any one suppose that this opinion—that a bishop and presbyter is the same, and that one is the denomination of age, and the other of office—is not sanctioned by the Scriptures, but is only a private fancy of my own, let him read over again the apostle's words to the Philippians: 'Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. Philippi is a single city of Macedonia; and certainly of those who are now styled 'bishops,' there could not have been several at one time in the same city. But, because at that time they called the same persons 'bishops,' whom they styled also 'presbyters,' therefore the apostle spoke indifferently of bishops as of presbyters."

Jerome then refers to the fact, that St. Paul, having sent for the *presbyters* (in the plural) of the *single city* of Ephesus only, afterwards called the same persons *bishops*. (Acts xx.) To this fact he calls particular attention; and then observes that in the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the care of the church divided equally among many. "Obey THEM that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for THEY watch for your souls, as THEY that must give account; that THEY may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is [un]profitable for you." "And Peter," continues Jerome, "who received his name from the firmness of his faith, says, in his Epistle, 'The presbyters who are among

you I exhort, who am also a presbyter, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you," [he omits the words, "taking the oversight thereof," ἐπισκοποῦντες, that is, superintending it, or acting the part of bishops,] "'not by constraint, but willingly.' These things we have brought forward to show, that, with the ancients, presbyters were the same as bishops. But in order that the roots of dissension might be plucked up, *a usage gradually took place*, that the whole care should devolve upon one. Therefore, as the presbyters know that it is by *the custom of the church* that they are subject to him who is placed over them, so let the bishops know that they are above presbyters rather *by custom than the truth of our Lord's appointment*; and that they ought to *rule the church in common*, herein imitating Moses."\*

This is not the only place where St. Jerome maintains these principles. In his Letter to Evagrius, the authenticity of which is undeniable, he argues still more largely in proof of the position, that bishops and presbyters were of the same order in the apostolical churches; he then gives the following reason for the disparity between them which afterwards prevailed:—"The election of one from among themselves, to be placed above the rest, was a practice which they subsequently adopted, to operate as a remedy against schism; lest each presbyter, attracting to himself a portion of the church of Christ, should break the existing unity. For, even at Alexandria, from the age of Mark the evangelist, down to that of the bishops Heracleas and

\* Riddle's "Manual of Christian Antiquities," pp. 187, 188.



Dionysius, one chosen from among themselves, *and placed by them in a higher degree, was dignified by the presbyters with the title of 'bishop ;'* \* much after the same manner as that in which an army chooses its commander ; or as the deacons elect one from their own body, of whose diligence they have had experience, and style him their 'archdeacon.' For, if we except the bishop's act of ordination, what is there which he does, and which a presbyter may not do ?" †

The fact which Jerome has here stated is of great importance in the argument. He says that from the death of St. Mark till the time of Dionysius, a period of about two hundred years, whenever a bishop of Alexandria died, the presbyters of the church in that city elected one of their number to succeed him in the vacant office : and his words clearly imply, as Bishop Stillingfleet has shown, that the man was made a bishop by the act of election, performed by his brother presbyters. We cannot desire stronger proof than this, that presbyters and bishops were then regarded as of the same order. All the new powers with which the bishop was invested, he received from the presbyters, who could not give what they did not themselves possess. Yet, as Jerome observes, when a body of presbyters had invested any one of their number with the episcopal office, they still discharged the various duties of the ministry, preaching the word, and dispensing the sacraments, in common with the man whom they had placed at their head ; and only abstaining from the act of ordaining other ministers in his absence, lest by acting independently they should violate the unity of the church.

\* See Note Q, at the end of the volume.

† "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. ii., pp. 563-569.

As the bishop possessed no new power, but such as the presbyters had given him, so they had, by virtue of their office, as much right to ordain other ministers as he had; only they voluntarily waved the exercise of this right for the attainment of a higher good.

The following is Bishop Stillingfleet's statement respecting the origin of episcopacy:—"When the apostles were taken out of the way, who kept the main power in their own hands of ruling the several presbyteries, or delegated some to do it, (who had a main hand in the planting churches with the apostles, and thence are called in Scripture sometimes 'fellow-labourers in the Lord,' and sometimes 'evangelists,' and by Theodoret 'apostles,' but of a second order,) after, I say, these were deceased, and the main power left in the presbyteries, the several presbyteries enjoying an equal power among themselves, especially being many in one city, thereby great occasion was given to many schisms, partly by the banding of the presbyters one against another, partly by the sidings of the people with some against the rest, partly by the too common use of the power of ordination in presbyters, by which they were more able to increase their own party, by ordaining those who would join with them, and by this means to perpetuate schisms in the church; upon this, when the wiser and graver sort considered the abuses following this promiscuous use of this power of ordination, and withal having in their minds the excellent frame of the government of the church under the apostles, and their deputies, and for preventing future schisms and divisions among themselves, they unanimously agreed to choose one out of their number, who was best qualified for the management of so great a trust, and to devolve the

exercise of the power of ordination and jurisdiction to him ; yet so as he did act nothing of importance without the consent and concurrence of the presbyters, who were still to be as the common council to the bishop. This I take to be the true and just account of the original of episcopacy in the primitive church according to Jerome." \*

This subject is stated with equal clearness and candour by Mr. Riddle, in his valuable "Manual of Christian Antiquities." He says, "Bishops and presbyters were not at first distinct orders, but the bishop was only the chief in a body of presbyters. And the same titles of distinction were applied to both ; namely, *προεστώτες*, *προστάται*, *προέδροι*, *præpositi*, *antistites* ; that is, in one word, 'presidents.' When the first place was assigned to the bishops, they were only *primi inter pares*,—'chief among equals.'

"It is, however, correct to say, that the order (that is, degree, office) of bishop is different from that of presbyter ; if we mean by this only that a bishop is a presbyter invested by the church with superior rank and authority, and intrusted with the discharge of duties appropriated, by the same authority, to the episcopal office. The original commission, divinely given to all presbyters, whether bishops or others, is alike ; but from a very early period of the church, probably ever since the beginning of the second century, the church has judged it right and expedient to adopt a regular and permanent system of superintendency and subordination among her ministers, corresponding, in some respects, to the state of things in Crete when Titus resided in that island, possessed of a delegated authority over the other elders of the church,

\* "Irenicum," pp. 281, 282.

or in Ephesus, when Timothy was charged with a similar (temporary) superintendence." \*

Here, then, we have the same view of the origin of episcopacy for which we contend. It was not instituted by the Lord Jesus during His stay upon earth, nor by the apostles acting in His name and by His authority, but by the church. In this manner the more moderate of the Episcopalians themselves speak concerning the origin of their system of ecclesiastical government; claiming for it, not the command of Almighty God, nor the authoritative teaching or act of an apostle, but assigning it to the judgment and discretion of Christian presbyteries, acting, of course, with the concurrence of their respective churches, and intending more effectually to preserve the unity of particular Christian communities, as well as to confer honour upon the men whom God had distinguished by the superiority of their endowments, or were otherwise remarkable for their fidelity, zeal, and usefulness.†

"That which I take for lawful indifferent episcopacy," says Baxter, "is such as Jerome saith was introduced for the avoiding of divisions, though it was not from the beginning: When among many elders, in every single church, one of most wisdom and gravity is made their president; yea, without whom no ordinations, or great matters, shall be done. The churches began this so early, and received it so universally, and without any considerable dissent or opposition, even before emperors became Christians, that I dare not be one that shall set against it, or dishonour such episcopacy." ‡

\* Riddle's "Manual," pp. 185, 186.

† See Note R, at the end of the volume.

‡ Baxter's "Church History of Bishops and Councils," p. 23. Edition of 1680.

## XI.—THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

WE have seen that the ministers and pastors of the Christian church were originally of one rank ; and that for the sake of convenience, from respect for age, wisdom, and piety, and for the purpose of preserving inviolate the unity of the several Christian communities, one of the presbyters was placed at the head of his brethren ; and that to him the title of “bishop” was at length exclusively applied ; the church thus departing, and that most obviously, from the phraseology of Scripture, where bishops are as matter of course called “presbyters,” and presbyters are called “bishops,” without the slightest intimation of any difference between them.

But the change did not end here. In the first instance, the bishop was merely parochial, but he gradually became a diocesan. Being appointed to preside over a church which was situated in some city, other churches in the surrounding villages and towns were progressively raised up by the labours of persons who were connected with the mother church ; and these religious communities were all placed under the superintendence of the bishop, whose jurisdiction extended, in many cases, through a wide tract of country, to which the name of a diocese was applied. Provincial synods,



or periodical assemblies of ministers, were also introduced, being generally held twice a year; and were mostly composed of bishops, as the representatives of their several churches. Errors in doctrine, and irregularities in practice, not unfrequently arose, disturbing the general peace of the church; and hence Councils, both general and provincial, were often convened. In process of time, these came to be formed almost exclusively of bishops. In this manner the episcopal influence increased more and more; especially as the simplicity of evangelical truth was gradually corrupted. The doctrine of salvation by faith, which is so prominent in the Epistles of St. Paul, was obscured by a vain philosophy, and by human opinion; a saving efficacy was attributed to the sacraments, which were spoken of in language of pomp and mystery, so as to inspire the minds of the common people with awe and terror. The Lord's Supper was called a sacrifice; the officiating minister was called a priest; and as the bishop was supposed to have communicated a supernatural power to the priesthood by the act of ordination, he was held in the profoundest reverence, as the medium through which salvation is received from the Lord Jesus. The bishop pronounced sentences of excommunication; and when men were thus cut off from the church, they were given to understand that there was little or no hope of their salvation, unless the sentence should be reversed. The bishop also absolved the excommunicated offenders when they were deemed penitent, thus restoring them to communion with the church, and to the hope of eternal life. The bishop was thus, in effect, regarded as shutting and opening the gate of heaven; so that even civil rulers of the highest rank trembled before

him, as being armed with the authority of God. In those times, the art of printing not having been discovered, books were scarce and dear ; and hence the Holy Scriptures were not generally read and studied by the people ; so that the instruction which they received was mostly imparted to them from the pulpit, where the trumpet often gave an uncertain sound. Sermons were distinguished by an inflated rhetoric, rather than by simplicity, and soundness of doctrine. Many preachers in their sermons treated the Scriptures allegorically, deducing from them just what doctrines they pleased.

It should also be observed, that when Constantine, the Roman Emperor, assumed the profession of Christianity, in the early part of the fourth century, he lavished wealth and honours upon the clergy, especially upon the bishops ; and many of his imperial successors vied with him in the exercise of an injudicious and ill-timed liberality. Pious individuals, also, under the influence of various motives, enriched the church by gifts and legacies, till many of the bishops became princes in wealth and pomp. The government of the church was gradually conformed to the orders of the state ; so that new clerical degrees were created, answering to those of the Roman empire. In addition to bishops who had now become prelates, there were introduced archbishops, metropolitans, patriarchs, cardinals, and, above all, the Pope ; as the visible vicegerent and representative of the Lord Jesus. When the hierarchy was thus complete, a general profligacy of manners ensued ; the Gospel of Christ was perverted by error in its worst forms ; the pride, intolerance, and wickedness of the clergy were insupportable ; the right of private judgment was denied to the people ; the Holy Scriptures

were withheld ; and the entire Christian world groaned under the weight of a hideous tyranny, claiming to be the holy and merciful religion of the Lord Jesus.

It would be impossible in this place to trace the progress of the Papal hierarchy from its rise to its consummation. The task has been executed with equal power and fidelity by Richard Baxter, in his "Treatise of Episcopacy," and his "True History of Councils," and more recently by the masterly hand of Dr. George Campbell, in his "Lectures on Ecclesiastical History ;" one of the most important and valuable books on this subject that either this or any other nation has produced. With great accuracy, discrimination, and judgment, he has followed that hierarchy, step by step, from the simple order of the apostolic churches, which were severally governed by a college of presbyters, through parochial episcopacy, diocesan episcopacy, and all the other gradations of rank by which the Church of Rome, and some other churches following her example, have departed from the simplicity of the apostolical arrangements, as they are described by the pen of inspiration. In the first instance, all pastors of churches were called "bishops ;" then the title was given to those of them who for the sake of convenience were placed at the head of their several presbyteries ; then over these were placed archbishops, or metropolitans ; then over them were placed patriarchs ; and, at the head of all, the Pope, with his college of cardinals, with an endless train of inquisitors, monks, nuns,—

"eremites, and friars,

White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery ;"

corrupting the truth, substituting childish superstitions

for the pure forms of Christian worship, perverting the minds of the people, and usurping dominion over their consciences by deeds of cruelty and blood, worse than heathenism ever perpetrated.

“It would grieve any sober Christian,” says Baxter, “to read how the Christian world hath been tossed up and down, and the people distracted, and princes disturbed and dethroned, and heresies fomented, and horrid persecutions and bloodshed caused, by the pride and contentiousness of prelates: and most of all this in prosecution of that controversy, which Christ decided long ago; namely, who should be the greatest.”\*

“The bishops, by the people’s consent, endeavoured to form the government of the church within the” (Roman) “empire into a conformity to the government of the empire; and they contrived that those cities whose governors had the chief power, their bishops should have answerable church power; the glory of the empire drawing them, for seeming interest, into imitation.”†

“It is most evident, in all church history, that the clergy, leaving the Christian purity, simplicity, and love, did climb the ladder, step by step, till they ascended the Papal height: and it is a mere dream of them that think it was the Bishop of Rome alone that thus ascended, and not the army that made him their general. As the boat riseth with the waters, so did the Pope with the ascending clergy. Others strove for superiority, as he strove for supremacy. The strife began among Christ’s apostles, who should be the greatest, and who should sit next Him in His kingdom:

\* “Treatise of Episcopacy,” p. 26. Edition of 1681.

† “True History of Councils,” p. 12. Edition of 1682.

and though Christ then suppressed it by His word and Spirit, and the sufferings of the church took down those aspiring thoughts, as soon as Constantine had set them the ladder, what scrambling was there who should climb highest ! ” \*

“As the prelacy thus swelled, so the churches grew suddenly more corrupted with all manner of vice.” “When they should choose their bishops, they could seldom agree ; but frequently, instead of holy, peaceable votes, did turn to devilish rage and bloodshed, and covered the streets and church-floors with the carcasses of the slain.” “Frequently they fell into feuds, and fought it out, and murdered people by multitudes. Even the strict and holy monks of the Egyptian deserts were as forward as others to fighting, bloodshed, and sedition.” “In a word, when Constantine had brought the world into the church, the church grew quickly too like the world.” “It was not the people only, but the pastors, both prelates and presbyters, that grew licentious, wicked, proud, contentious, turbulent ; the shame of their order and profession, and the great disturbers and dividers of churches ; except here and there an Ambrose, an Augustine, a Chrysostom, a Basil, a Gregory, an Atticus, a Proclus, and a few such, that so shined among a darkened, degenerate clergy, as to be singled out for saints.” †

“The emperors being Christians, and desiring without force to draw all the people from heathenism to Christianity, they thought it the best way to advance the Christians in worldly respects, which ever win on common minds. And so they endued the churches and

\* “True History of Councils,” pp. 48, 49.

† “Treatise of Episcopacy,” p. 23.



bishops with such honours and powers as were like to the honour and power of the civil governors in their kind. And the bishops, thus lifted up, did first enlarge their own dioceses as far as they could, and advance their power; and the world came unchanged into the church, both in cities and villages." \*

At the period of the Reformation, several of the most powerful minds in Europe were roused from a state of inglorious slumber; the right of private judgment being assumed, in opposition to the Romish Church, which claimed to be the authorised and infallible interpreter of the Almighty's will, and to exercise an absolute dominion over the understandings and consciences of mankind. The leading principle upon which the Reformers generally acted, was the sufficiency of Holy Scripture. They contended that the inspired writings embrace every subject that bears directly upon the duty and salvation of mankind; so that whatever is opposed to the Holy Scriptures is positively erroneous; and whatever is beside the Scriptures, or additional to them, is non-essential, and on that account should not be imposed either as an article of faith, or as matter of absolute duty. The Reformers, therefore, brought to the test of Scripture, not only the doctrinal tenets of the Papal Church, but her forms of worship, and of church-order; and the result was, the introduction of most important changes in respect of doctrine, rites, and government.

In England the church was not left at liberty to reform herself, by means of her own courts and authorities. The civil power interposed, and placed the Reformers under restraint. The hierarchy had long been an instru-

\* "Treatise of Episcopacy," p. 62.

ment of state policy, and the secular power was not willing to abandon so useful and convenient a means of prosecuting its own plans and purposes; the bishops being chosen by the crown, and therefore expected to be the servants of its will. Some of the Reformers, at least, would have carried their work to a much greater length than they were permitted to carry it. The authority of the Pope, however, was utterly disclaimed in England; but archbishops and diocesan bishops were still retained, exercising authority over the body of the clergy; and this order is still continued, the mitre, with a seat in the House of Lords, being one of the prizes for which Churchmen are at liberty to contend. Not a few of them declare that this order is strictly apostolical, and call upon all classes of people to submit to it as matter of absolute duty; those who refuse being out of the pale of Christ's church, and left to the "uncovenanted mercies" of God.

In some other places a very different course was adopted by the Reformers; diocesan episcopacy being swept away altogether from the Protestant churches in Scotland, Holland, Switzerland, and France, and the presbyterian system adopted; so that in these communities presbyters govern their congregations and one another, and ordain men to the holy ministry.\* Most of these churches regard diocesan episcopacy as unnecessary, and a deviation from apostolical order; and not a

\* "There is no necessity that a superior must ordain; but as the College of Physicians, Philosophers, &c., make physicians, philosophers, as approved, so may equals in the ministry. Do not bishops make or consecrate bishops? If this were not so, who makes the Pope? If he did not pretend that his power is given him immediately from Christ, he must grant that there are some above him, and so he is not the sovereign."—Baxter's "Cain and Abel," p. 58. Edition of 1689.

few of their members regard it as unlawful and injurious. Their hostility to it is therefore firm and uncompromising. The Church of Scotland has various courts for the maintenance of discipline: such as the kirk session in every parish, consisting of the minister and a certain number of lay elders, who take cognizance of any local case of immorality, and exclude flagrant offenders from the table of the Lord. For the decision of graver matters she has her presbyteries and synods, and her General Assembly, which is her highest and final court of appeal. A system of government somewhat similar prevails in all Presbyterian churches. Presbyters ordain presbyters, and questions of doctrine and discipline are decided in meetings of ministers and lay elders.

The lay elders whom Presbyterianism recognises are men who are not in the ministry; that is, they do not preach; but are officially appointed to take part with the ministers in the government of the church. Yet they are not regarded by Presbyterians as laymen, strictly speaking; for they are all solemnly appointed to the office which they sustain; and they are said to be entitled to their support from the funds of the church, if they choose to claim it. The passage of Scripture that is usually cited as authorising this order of men is 1 Tim. v. 17; from which it is inferred, that in the apostolical churches there was a class of elders who did not preach, but were simply employed in ruling, or in the maintenance of discipline.

On this subject Bishop Stillingfleet has said: "We see a company of presbyters settled in great churches. Now we are not to imagine that all these did equally attend to one part of their work; but all of them,

according to their several abilities, laid out themselves : some in overseeing and guiding the church ; but yet so as, upon occasion, to discharge all pastoral acts belonging to their function : others betook themselves chiefly to the conversion of others to the faith, either in the cities, or the adjacent countries. By which we come to a full, clear, and easy understanding of that so-much controverted place, 1 Tim. v. 17 : ‘The elders that rule well are counted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in the word and doctrine.’ Not as though it implied a distinct sort of elders from the pastors of churches : but among those elders that were ordained in the great churches, some attended most to ruling the flock already converted ; others laboured most in converting others to the faith by preaching : though both these, being entered into the peculiar function of laying themselves forth for the benefit of the church, did deserve both respect and maintenance ; yet especially those who employed themselves in converting others ; inasmuch as their burden was greater, their labours more abundant, their suffering more, and their very office coming nearest to the apostolical function.”

“The presbyters spoken of by Paul in his Epistle to Timothy are Scripture bishops : but lay elders are not Scripture bishops ; therefore these cannot here be meant.”

“Those which are called ‘presbyters’ in one place, (1 Tim. iv. 14,) are called ‘bishops’ in another ; (1 Tim. iii. 1 ;) and the main force of the argument lies in the promiscuous use of ‘bishop’ and ‘presbyter.’ Now then, if lay elders be not such bishops, then they are not Paul’s presbyters. Now Paul’s bishops must be διδακτικοί, *fit to teach*, and therefore not lay elders.”\*

\* “Irenicum,” pp. 336, 337.

It should also be observed, that some of the ablest advocates of Presbyterianism deny that lay elders had any existence in the apostolic churches, and regard their appointment in modern times as an unauthorised innovation. Of this judgment was Richard Baxter, and his very learned and pious friend, Mr. John Corbet. There appears, indeed, an obvious unfairness in placing laymen upon an equality with ministers in the government of the church; because questions must occasionally come before them, in their judicial capacity, respecting Christian doctrine, in reference to which a tradesman, who has never made systematic divinity his study, is not competent to pronounce an opinion. The employment of lay elders in the direct government of the church we should also conceive to be both unnecessary and a deviation from the apostolic plan. Ministers, who have been a means of converting the people, are the best qualified to watch over them in the Lord, as their spiritual children; and the elders, or pastors, whom the apostles intrusted with the care of the churches, so far as we are able to ascertain, were all teachers, as well as pastors.\*

The Lutheran churches, at the time of the Reformation, took a middle course with regard to ecclesiastical order. In Germany and Denmark, where the tenets of Luther were received, diocesan episcopacy already existed; and this great Reformer thought that it might be perpetuated with advantage, not as commanded in Holy Scripture, but as an arrangement of long standing, and that might be turned to a beneficial account. He said, "Bishops and presbyters are but one order. Of this fact Jerome was not ignorant. Neither had the

\* See Note S, at the end of the volume.



bishops of that early age greater congregations than those which are now to be found at Torgau, Leipsic, Grimm, or Wirtemberg. Hippo was in no respect better than any of these modern cities : yet Augustine, the bishop of that see, was greater in the church of Christ than any pope or cardinal whatever ; and he consecrated many bishops and pastors." In accordance with these views, Luther, who was himself only a presbyter, repeatedly united with his fellow-presbyters and associates in the blessed work of reformation, in the consecration of bishops ; as did also the presbyter and Reformer, Bugenhagen, in Denmark.\* The Lutheran churches, therefore, have diocesan bishops or superintendents ; but they discard the theory of an episcopal succession from the apostles, as a distinct and peculiar order. The episcopacy which they have was given to them by their presbyter-reformers, not as an apostolical, but as an ecclesiastical, ordinance.

Mr. Wesley's views of church-government appear to have agreed exactly with those of the great German Reformer ; and there is a remarkable similarity in the plans which they adopted for the preservation of that work of God, of which they were respectively the instruments. He states, in his *Journal*, under the date of January 20th, 1746, " I read over Lord King's ' Account of the Primitive Church.' In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught : but if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are essentially of one order."

He expresses himself to the same effect in his " Notes on the New Testament." Acts xx. 17 : " Perhaps

\* " Life of Charles Wesley," vol. ii., pp. 570, 576.

elders and bishops were then the same ; or no otherwise different than are the rector of a parish and his curates." On Phil. i. 1, "the bishops and deacons," he says, "The word 'bishops' here includes all the presbyters at Philippi, as well as the ruling presbyter ; the names 'bishop' and 'presbyter,' or 'elder,' being promiscuously used in the first ages." In his note on 1 Tim. iii. 2, he describes a bishop as the "pastor of a congregation."

In his "Letter to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury," &c., he says, "Lord King's 'Account of the Primitive Church' convinced me many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain."\*

Addressing his brother Charles, he declares his belief that he had as much right to ordain men to the ministry as he had to dispense the sacraments.†

With these views, Mr. Wesley, in the year 1784, gave an ecclesiastical constitution to his Societies in America, by appointing Dr. Coke a general superintendent, directing him to confer the same office upon Mr. Francis Asbury, who was already on the American continent.‡ With the concurrence of their brethren in the ministry, these excellent men assumed the more ecclesiastical name of "bishops," which has been also applied to their successors, and is regarded rather as the designation of men sustaining a peculiar office, than of men who belong to a distinct order : for the office was assigned to them by a presbyter, like that of the Lutheran bishops. In the Methodist Episcopal Church

\* Works, vol. xiii., p. 218.

† "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. ii., p. 416.

‡ See Note T, at the end of the volume.

the bishops are chosen from among their ministerial brethren, on account of their age, experience, abilities, and character, for the purpose of holding Conferences, appointing the stations of the ministers, ordaining candidates, and carrying the discipline of the body into practical effect : but they cannot make rules for the Church, or alter those which are already made. This can only be done by the General Conference, which meets once in four years, and to which the bishops themselves are amenable.

Mr. Wesley, like the immortal Luther, was providentially placed at the head of a large body of religious people, his children in the Lord, for whose spiritual interests he was bound to care ; and after the example of the great German Reformer he instituted among them such an episcopacy as he deemed likely to conduce to their advancement in piety, and the increase of their number. In this matter he judged correctly, as the event demonstrates ; the Methodist Episcopal Church being at this day the most numerous religious body in the United States. “ As to my own judgment,” says he, “ I still believe ‘ the episcopal form of church-government to be scriptural and apostolical.’ I mean, *well agreeing* with the practice and writings of the apostles. But that it is prescribed in Scripture, I do not believe. This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I have been heartily ashamed of ever since I read Bishop Stillingfleet’s ‘ Irenicon.’ I think he has unanswerably proved that ‘ neither Christ nor His apostles prescribe any particular form of church-government ; and that the plea of Divine right for diocesan episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive church.’ ” \*

\* Works, vol. xiii., p. 179.

In Great Britain Wesleyan Methodism differs from the form that it bears in America ; yet it recognises the same great and leading principles of church-order. The parent-stock of its discipline, if we may so speak, in both countries, is Presbyterian ; but upon this stock is grafted in America a useful and efficient episcopacy.\* There the bishops are appointed to their office for life ; but a different order is adopted in England, where the ministers, after due trial, are ordained to the pastoral work, and by this act are constituted and recognised presbyters. In this respect they are all equal ; and to their united care the societies and congregations in the various Circuits are committed. They all preach the word ; they all administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper ; they all enforce the discipline of the body ; and they all alike " watch for souls, as they that must give account." Thus far they act upon apostolic practice and precept ; for thus the apostles ordained, or directed to be ordained, presbyters in all churches, wheresoever planted. No church, it would appear, was committed to the care of only one man, but to a body of presbyters, more or less in number as each case might require.

Out of the original presbyteries, according to the testimony of St. Jerome, an episcopacy was instituted as matter of free and voluntary arrangement ; one of their number being placed at the head of his brethren, and invested by them with a certain degree of authority for their mutual benefit and that of the church. This practice, it is presumed, may be still followed, or even varied, according to circumstances, provided that nothing

\* See Note U, at the end of the volume.

be done that is detrimental to the maintenance and advancement of true spiritual religion. In every Wesleyan Circuit, therefore, there is a superintendent minister, who is especially bound to see that his fellow-labourers fulfil their allotted task of duty, and that the societies walk in holiness and peace. Yet the superintendent minister, to whose special care the societies are intrusted, is amenable to the annual meeting of the ministers of his District; and the acts of the District-Meeting are subjected to the review of the yearly Conference, consisting of the collective pastorate of the body. In a sense, therefore, the superintendent of a Circuit, the chairman of a District, and the president of the Conference, are all bishops, invested with various degrees of power over their brethren; not as men of a distinct and peculiar order in the church, but as the first among equals, and as matter of voluntary arrangement, for the preservation of discipline, and the advancement of Christian godliness.

The fact is, that in all organized bodies there must be a certain degree of subordination, or there can be neither regularity nor peace. Among the Presbyterians of Scotland there is a superintendency analogous to that which exists in the Wesleyan body; for a minister presides in the kirk session, in the meetings of the presbytery and the synod, as well as in the General Assembly. "In Scotland," says Leighton, "they have used the help of visitors for the reformation of their churches, committing the care of a country or circuit to some one man, which was as high a sort of episcopacy, at least, as any I am pleading for: besides that, they had moderators in all their synods, which were tem-



porary bishops.”\* When a man is admitted a member of a church thus constituted, he in effect engages to observe and respect its order; and no honourable and upright man will ever violate the engagement. If his views change, so that he cannot thus submit, he will quietly withdraw, and connect himself with a system which he conscientiously prefers; treating with due respect the convictions of his brethren, who deem it their duty still to adhere to their former views and practice.

But some men are not satisfied with such an episcopacy as that which has been now described. They claim for bishops an exclusive power of ordination and of government, and that by Divine right. We dispute their claim, and demand scriptural evidence of its truth; and this they have never been able to produce. To confirm their plea, they allege that such an episcopacy as that for which they contend is necessary in order to the preservation of sound doctrine, the suppression of error, and the conservation of Christian piety and morals. This, again, we deny, and in defence of our principles appeal to matter of fact. It is notorious that in Presbyterian Scotland, from the time of the Reformation, there has been a better discipline preserved, both in respect of ministers and people, than in the Episcopal Church of England. The Scottish nation was for ages comparatively intelligent, religious, and moral, while the peasantry and labouring classes in England were to a fearful extent ignorant, ungodly, and wicked. The noble efforts which have of late been put forth by the

\* “Theological Lectures,” p. 405. Edition of 1763. See also Baxter’s “Five Disputations of Church Government,” p. 231. Edition of 1659.

Church of England, to educate and evangelize the masses of the people, cannot be fairly attributed to her episcopacy, but rather to the exertions of Nonconformist bodies, which have provoked her to jealousy. She had her bishops, her wealth, and her entire organization, from the Restoration in 1660 till the beginning of the present century; yet, with a few honourable exceptions, hers was a state of religious apathy.

Our argument is greatly strengthened by the existing state of things in the Episcopal Church of this country. There is within her pale a party whose theological tenets are essentially Popish, and whose passion for ceremony is of the same character. Several of the bishops, in their charges and otherwise, have "shaken their mitred locks" at these men; yet the evil exists; and the bishops want either the ability or the will to suppress it. The Church of Rome exults in the accessions which are made to her ranks by the ministry and writings of faithless men who live upon Protestant endowments. It is a fact no less lamentable and notorious, that among the clergy of the Episcopal Church, contributors to the popular literature of the day, and of high rank and office in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, there are men who openly deny the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture, repudiate the doctrine of atonement for sin by the sacrifice of the Cross, with other essential verities of the Gospel. Where, then, is the energy of diocesan episcopacy? Where are its superior advantages? Such fearful evils would not be tolerated in the Wesleyan Connexion, "no, not for an hour."

The conclusion of the whole matter is this. The government of the church by presbyters we acknowledge

as of Divine right ; for the apostles clearly and undeniably instituted this order, and directed the churches over which they were placed to submit to their pastoral rule in the Lord. An episcopacy in which a presbyter is appointed to direct and control his brother presbyters, and in concurrence with them to preach the word, and administer Christian discipline, we also acknowledge, as matter of voluntary arrangement, and as connected with great advantages. But the Divine right of diocesan episcopacy, claiming an exclusive authority of ordination and of government in the church of God, we do not acknowledge. Such episcopacy we conceive to be unsupported by Scripture ; and it has often been employed in opposing the work of God in the world, and in oppressing His ministers and servants. According to the New Testament, there has been no class of officers in the church higher than that of presbyters, since the apostles fell asleep ; and to us it is matter of solid satisfaction, therefore, that the ministerial superintendency which Wesleyan Methodism acknowledges, both in England and America, is a superintendency which a presbyter originated, and which presbyters control and direct. As the stream can never rise above its fountain, so a Wesleyan bishop in America, and a Wesleyan superintendent, chairman, and president in England, can only be regarded as the first among equals. The powers which they possess have been conferred upon them by their brother-presbyters, for high and holy purposes, which it should be their zealous endeavour to accomplish.

Some kind of subordination among ministers we conceive to be indispensable ; for offences among them, as well as among the private members of the church, will unavoidably arise. Some of them will depart from the

truth in their teaching; others will exhibit in their practice a lax morality; and in both cases the interference of discipline is requisite, that the Gospel be not blamed. While the apostles lived, they exercised a general superintendence over the pastors, as well as over the people belonging to the different churches, and interposed, either personally, by letter, or by an evangelist, so as to correct the various forms of evil as they appeared. St. Paul threatened to visit the Corinthians "with a rod," unless they should promptly submit to put away the evils which had appeared among them, and of which he had received a credible account. (1 Cor. iv. 21.) He directed Timothy as to the manner in which he should receive an accusation against an offending elder, with whom he might be called to deal in the way of discipline. (1 Tim. iii.) As Timothy was a young man, the apostle said to him, "Rebuke not an elder," who may have merited censure, "but entreat him as a father," to correct what may be amiss in his doctrine or in his conduct. (1 Tim. v. 1.)

In what manner cases of ministerial delinquency should be met, when the apostles and their auxiliaries, the evangelists, were no more, was left to the pious discretion of the church and its pastors; for the Holy Scriptures contain no explicit instructions on the subject. Whether an offending minister can be more effectually dealt with by an individual bishop, to whom he is amenable, or by a united pastorate, consisting of a body of brother ministers, opinions, of course, may be expected to vary; although we think, judging from facts, that the advantage is decidedly in favour of the latter mode. The efficient exercise of the ministry, in

all its departments of service, and the consequent purity of the church, are the great design of all ecclesiastical arrangements; and in respect of details which Christ and His apostles have not decided, freedom of thought and action may be fairly claimed by Christian people, and none of them ought rashly to censure and condemn one another. "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."

While we claim, then, the right of private judgment in matters of church-order, we would freely concede the same right to others, and cherish all due respect for the views and conscientious convictions of men who regard diocesan episcopacy as strictly apostolical in its origin. Far be it from us to deny its lawfulness, or to brand it as anti-Christian, as it has often been by intolerant and violent men. It is one of many forms that are beneficial or otherwise, according to circumstances, and the mode in which they are administered. In the hands of such men as Ussher and Leighton, it is a blessing; but in the hands of such men as Bonner and Laud it is a terrible instrument of oppression, and a hindrance to the cause of truth and godliness. Its high antiquity, and general prevalence in the church through so many centuries, could nothing else be pleaded in its favour, will in all probability ever procure for it many erudite and conscientious advocates. "It is easy to see," says the candid and upright Baxter, "that episcopacy is neither such an upstart thing, nor defended by such contemptible reasons, as that the controversy is like to die with this age. Undoubtedly there will be a learned and godly party for it while the world endureth; unless God make, by illumination or revelation, some wonder-



ful change on the sons of men, that I think few men do expect." \*

The strongest objection that we feel to its claims, as it is administered in the English Church, is that to which Baxter has given great prominence in his writings; namely, that, by assuming an exclusive jurisdiction in the church, it deprives the great body of the clergy of that pastoral authority which, according to the New Testament, belongs essentially to their office; for how can a modern prelate be answerable for the maintenance of Christian discipline in every parish of his diocese? How can he exclude from the Lord's table, in places where his face is never seen, every drunkard, adulterer, and profane swearer? Yet for a discipline more strict than this Christ held the angels of the seven churches of Asia responsible; and if the prelates really are, as some of them claim to be, the successors of those angels, what account can they give of the absence of all ecclesiastical discipline among the laity of their dioceses? A parish clergyman, if armed with due authority, might deal with the "Balaams," the "Jezebels," and the "Nicolaitanes," who present themselves at the table of the Lord, requiring the symbols of redeeming grace, while they are living in open sin; but the pastoral crook of a diocesan prelate these delinquents never feel, and never fear.

\* Baxter's "Five Disputations of Church Government," p. 300. Edition of 1659.

## XII.—THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

THE exorbitant and unscriptural claims which have been made in modern times in behalf of diocesan episcopacy have rendered it necessary that we should go somewhat largely into that question; which we now dismiss, and turn our attention to subjects of a more practical nature. We will first inquire into the view which the Holy Scriptures give us of the true character and appointment of Christ's ordinary ministers; and then of their proper work and duty.

I. With respect to their true character and appointment, we observe,—

1. That personal godliness is their first and most important qualification. "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2.) Here is the apostolic rule. The good deposit of evangelical truth and discipline is to be committed to "faithful men," and to them only. The appointment of an unfaithful man to the sacred office is an unauthorised act, by whomsoever performed. A "faithful man" is a man who is possessed of a true and lively faith in Christ as his Saviour; so that he is justified through the blood of the Cross, and sanctified by the power of the Holy Ghost. He is saved from the terrors

of an evil conscience, and from the dominion of both inward and outward sin, and lives in the constant exercise of holy and heavenly affections. He loves God, and all mankind for God's sake; and he desires, above all things, to please God, and to promote His work and glory. A faithful man lives by faith, and walks by faith, habitually seeing Him that is invisible, and realising the unseen and eternal world. He is also a man of fidelity. He is faithful to God and to Christ, whom he lives to glorify; faithful to the church, whose edification and enlargement he lives to promote; faithful to mankind generally, diligently fulfilling every relative duty; faithful to his own spiritual and everlasting interests, subordinating everything of an earthly nature to the salvation of the soul, regarding that as the great business and concern of life.

This is not the only place where faithfulness is spoken of as essential to the true ministerial character. Our blessed Lord describes a Christian minister as a faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord makes a "ruler over His household, to give them their portion of meat in due season;" (Luke xii. 42;) and St. Paul, speaking of himself, and of his fellow-labourers in the Gospel, says, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.)

The truth is, that without personal piety, and that deep and sincere, no man can adequately understand the Gospel, and is therefore not qualified to teach it. At the same time, he is unable to sympathize with the people of his charge in the sorrows and joys of the Christian life; so that he must unavoidably play the

hypocrite in the discharge of his official duties, by affecting feelings which are alien from his heart, endeavouring to appear to others what he knows he is not in reality. A more disreputable character than that of an ungodly minister does not exist. The true minister of Christ, according to Baxter, "is the man that learnedly and judiciously openeth the word of life, that closely and skilfully and seriously applieth it; that is an example of holiness, sobriety, love, meekness, humility, and patience to the flock; who spareth no labour, or cost, or suffering, for the saving of men's souls; who is for the wisdom which 'is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.' This is the pastor that is excellent in our eyes." \*

2. A minister should be a man of some considerable standing and experience in religion. "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." (1 Tim. iii. 6.) The word *νεόφυτον*, here rendered "novice," signifies, as the marginal rendering is, "one newly come to the faith;" or, as Mr. Wesley translates it, "a new convert." The reason is, that to a great extent he is inexperienced in the things of God, and is especially ignorant of Satan's devices; so that he is not only unable to give suitable counsel to the people who are under his care, but is in great danger of falling into the sin of pride, because of the honour that is conferred upon him, and the applause which is sometimes connected with his office. In this case the spiritual ruin of the man is to be expected, and great injury to the cause of Christ. With respect to deacons it is recommended by St. Paul, "Let these also

\* "Treatise of Episcopacy," p. 124. Edition of 1681.

first be proved ; then let them use the office, being found blameless ;" (1 Tim. iii. 10 ;) and much more is it necessary that men should be "proved" before they are intrusted with the higher office of the pastorate, which involves not only the ministry of the Gospel, but the care of souls.

3. The apostle declares it necessary that a minister of Christ should be a man of pure moral conduct. "Every one that nameth the name of Christ" is indeed required to "depart from iniquity," (2 Tim. ii. 19,) on pain of exclusion from the church on earth, and from heaven in the world to come : and much more is this necessary on the part of a teacher of Christianity, and a pastor of Christ's flock, whose life should be an open commentary upon his doctrine, and an example to all. Upon this subject, therefore, St. Paul has gone into considerable detail, 1 Tim. iii. 2-7.

"A bishop must be blameless." There must be nothing in his character and conduct to which any just exception can be taken, as inconsistent with the strictest purity, and with that holy love which is a distinguishing peculiarity of the Christian religion.

"The husband of one wife." It is not necessary that in every case a minister should be married. There may be satisfactory reasons why some should remain single ; but every one who does enter into the marriage relation must submit to the Christian law ; neither capriciously divorcing his wife, nor practising polygamy : evils which were common both among the ancient Jews and heathens, but which Christianity was intended for ever to remove. Some of the ancient fathers of the church, misled by a false philosophy, regarded this text as an absolute prohibition of second marriages ; but of



this there is no proof whatever. In many cases it is as much a man's duty to marry a second time as it was to marry at first; and there is no law of God that makes any distinction in this respect between a minister and a private Christian. It is an instance of sinful officiousness for men to forbid that which God has left free.

"Vigilant," or watchful, never slumbering at the post of duty, and never indulging himself in carelessness and sloth, but habitually alive to his responsibilities, duties, and dangers.

"Sober, of good behaviour,"—or "modest," as the word is rendered in the margin. A minister of Christ, like his Divine Master, should be gentle, meek, affable; not austere and repulsive; so that the timid may be able to approach him without fear, and ask his counsel.

"Given to hospitality;" which was particularly necessary in ancient times, when there were few or no inns for the accommodation of strangers, and when Christian strangers, especially, were subjected to great inconveniences, as the professors of a hated religion. That ministers may be able to practise "hospitality," they should, if possible, be raised above want, by the people to whose benefit their services are devoted. A minister of straitened income cannot practise the "hospitality" which the apostle enjoins, and therefore unavoidably fails in the fulfilment of an important duty.

"Not given to wine, no striker." Even this caution was not unnecessary, the Christians at Ephesus, where Timothy was when this Epistle was addressed to him, having been but recently converted from heathenism, which had allowed them freely to indulge themselves in intemperance and malignity; and it was requisite that the private members of the church, and much more the

men who were appointed to the pastoral office, should for ever abandon their sensual and quarrelsome habits, so as to be examples of personal purity, self-denial, and benevolence. The marginal rendering of the apostle's words is remarkable : "Not ready to quarrel, and offer wrong, as one in wine." A habit of intemperance in respect of wine may be easily formed, as many a fallen minister has proved to his disgrace and sorrow.

"Not greedy of filthy lucre," but content with his providential lot ; remembering the danger of riches, and the fact, that a minister of Christ's Gospel, when eagerly pursuing them, neglects the souls committed to his care by the good Shepherd, and for whom a strict account will be required of him in the last day. "Filthy" indeed is the "lucre" that a minister gains by the neglect and consequent ruin of his charge.

"Patient," bearing with the infirmities of his people, and steadily persevering in his work, however numerous and formidable may be his discouragements ; "not a brawler ;" ἀμαχον, "not a *fighter*," as the word signifies ; "not covetous," or loving money, eagerly desiring it, hoarding it up, and gloating over it as his treasure.

"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." The apostle here again supposes that the minister of Christ is a married man ; for the Popish doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy, which is opposed to the very letter of Holy Scripture, was then unknown in the church. At the same time, domestic government is an important branch of Christian duty ; and the man who cannot preserve religious and moral order in his own family is ill qualified to maintain godly discipline in the church of God.

"Moreover he must have a good report of them which

are without ; lest he fall into reproach and the condemnation of the devil." There is a wonderful power in the truly Christian character, to silence the tongue of slander, and command general respect. But it is a grievous evil when a minister gives an occasion to any adversary of the Lord Jesus to speak reproachfully of Him, of His truth, of His ordinances, or of His work. A minister of Christ, therefore, of all people, ought to be uniformly blameless and upright in the whole of his conduct, giving the people to feel that he really believes the Gospel which he preaches to them.

St. Paul mentions the subject of ministerial character again, Titus i. 6-9. In the selection of elders Titus was to look for the following qualifications :—" If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God ; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre ; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate ; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught," or " in teaching." His ministrations must not be light and frothy, but consist of " the faithful word." The apostle finishes the beautiful picture of the ministerial character by adding, " The servant of the Lord must not strive ; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.)

It is not surprising that the apostle should lay such stress upon the character of ministers, requiring of them an unimpeachable strictness and purity ; for sin in any man is " exceeding sinful," but in a minister of Christ's Gospel it possesses a tenfold aggravation. It may, indeed,

be said, with reference to the scandal that is usually connected with the conduct of a fallen minister, "This man perished not alone in his iniquity." Others perish with him, perverted by his example. The impenitent become more hardened in their guilt; young converts are discouraged, and turned out of the way; and even good men are staggered, and become faint-hearted. Most careful, therefore, should every man be, who sustains the sacred office, so to live as to be able always to say to the people among whom he labours, and that with confidence, "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. xi. 1.)

4. Competent ability with respect to evangelical knowledge, and to elocution, is also required in a minister of Christ. St. Paul twice states that a bishop should be "apt to teach." (1 Tim. iii. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 24.) He must, therefore, understand the Gospel, having carefully examined the entire system of revealed truth, and possess a readiness in the exposition, enforcement, and application of Christian doctrine. Nay, he must "be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers;" stopping the mouths of "vain talkers and deceivers." (Titus i. 9-11.) Men who understand only the elements of evangelical truth may be usefully employed in the exercise of an occasional and auxiliary ministry; but the man who is "separated unto the Gospel," and is intrusted with the care of souls, should labour to attain to a maturity in Christian knowledge. Some persons there are who are familiar with revealed truth, but whose utterance is so defective that they cannot preach it in an edifying manner; and others possess great self-command and fluency of speech, who have neither the piety nor the knowledge which the

Christian ministry requires. A good minister of Jesus Christ not only knows the truth, but can make it known to others; so that they shall not only have a just apprehension of its nature, but feel its power.

5. Ardent love to Christ, and to the souls of men, is another indispensable qualification for a minister of the Gospel. When St. Peter, in answer to our Saviour's inquiry, said, with earnestness and vehemence, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee," Jesus gave him the charge, "Feed My lambs," and, "Feed My sheep;" (John xxi. 17;) for a man who does not love Christ will never take due care of Christ's flock, and ought not, therefore, to be intrusted with the charge of them. St. Paul's love to Christ was such that he declared himself ready to die for Him, whenever the sacrifice might be demanded of him; and hence the fervour of the apostle's zeal in making known the name of Christ in the world, in seeking the souls that Christ had redeemed, and in watching over them when they were converted, and gathered into Christ's fold. We have a similar example in Timothy, concerning whom St. Paul says, "I have no man likeminded, who will *naturally care* for your state." (Phil. ii. 20.) Timothy's "care" for the people of God was genuine, sincere, and deep; free from all affectation and selfishness; the offspring of heavenly love. The same spirit prevailed in Epaphroditus, whom St. Paul exhorts the Philippians to hold in reputation; because, says the apostle, "for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me." (Phil. ii. 29, 30.) Indeed, what is "life" to a man that is thoroughly imbued with the love of Christ, so as to possess the true ministerial spirit? It



was love that brought our Saviour from heaven, to die upon the cross; and to all His faithful servants He imparts a portion of His own spirit, so that they love the souls of men with a passion like His own.

6. In a true minister of Christ there is an internal call, producing a conviction of duty, and a desire to be employed in calling sinners to repentance, and in the edification of believers. So tender is the care of Divine Providence, that God numbers the hairs of His people, and guides them in all the journey of life. The work of the ministry is the most solemn and weighty in which any man can by possibility be engaged, because of its direct connexion with the glory of God, and the salvation of redeemed men; and hence we cannot suppose that His faithful servants are directed to it by chance. They are unquestionably led to it by the hand of Him who has imparted to them the requisite qualifications which they possess. Their minds and hearts are therefore drawn to the work by a power which they scarcely know how to resist. There is in them a shrinking from the work, because of the difficulties and the responsibilities connected with it; and yet they cannot rest in the neglect of it. In this manner, I apprehend, we are to understand the words of St. Paul, where he says, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (1 Tim. iii. 1.) "The office of a bishop," in the apostolic times, and for some ages after, was an "office" of danger, of labour, and of anxiety, without wealth, and without worldly pomp and greatness. It was the almost certain forerunner of martyrdom, so that the men who sustained it might truly say, "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." (Rom. viii.

36.) Yet were there men who “desired” this “office,” not under the influence of worldly motives, but from a conviction of duty, and under the constraining power of the love of Christ, and of the souls for whom He died; saying, in effect,

“My life, my blood, I here present,  
If for Thy truth they may be spent.”

Hence it is that in the ordination service of the Church of England the candidate for holy orders is solemnly questioned, “Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of His glory, and the edifying of His people?” It is here assumed that in a true minister of the Lord Jesus there is not only a providential designation to the work, and the absence of sinister and unworthy motives, but a direct and inward motion of the Holy Spirit, prompting and urging him to undertake the service; and that this motion is matter of personal consciousness: so that the man can answer the inquiry to the satisfaction of his own conscience in the sight of God.\*

This doctrine of a Divine and inward call to the ministry is no matter of mere opinion, but of great practical importance. It affords a minister no small degree of comfort and encouragement in his work. When weighed down by temptation, opposition, and the apparent want of success, he remembers the certainty of his Divine call to the work, and thus, like David, “encourages himself in the Lord his God;” assured that He who hath appointed him to the service will sustain him in it, and not suffer him to labour in vain.

\* See Note W, at the end of the volume.

Such reflections are a stay to his drooping mind in the hour of trial. The Christian ministry is often called one of the learned professions, by men who know nothing of its real nature, and who thus place it on a level with the profession of medicine and of the law. If the Christian ministry be a mere profession, a man may lay it down whenever he finds its duties irksome and inconvenient; but if it is a Divine vocation, and men are really "moved by the Holy Ghost to take it upon themselves," then the Lord only can dismiss them from the service; and it is at the peril of their souls that they desist from it of their own accord, actuated by a love of ease, or of honour, or by any worldly motive. Unless the servants of Christ are disabled by infirmity or disease, they must patiently persevere in their work till He shall call them to Himself. If they love anything more than Christ and His work, He declares that they are unworthy of Him, nor will He acknowledge them as His in the day of final account. Fearful is the doom that awaits faithless ministers, who have forfeited their Divine call and commission by sin, by the indulgence of factious and quarrelsome habits, or through the loss of zeal and spirituality have voluntarily resigned their place in the pulpit, hid their talent in a napkin, put their light under a bushel, leaving the people whom they might have converted and saved to perish in ignorance and guilt.

"Our ordination consecrateth us to our office during life: and it is sacrilege and covenant-breaking with God to cast it off and alienate ourselves."\*

"Our ordination vow and covenant is holy. If

\* Baxter's "Nonconformist's Plea for Peace," p. 84. Edition of 1679.

Ananias and Sapphira died for alienating consecrated money by a lie, what shall we expect if we alienate consecrated persons by a lie? Souls are precious; sin is strong; Satan is subtle; the world is deceitful; the flesh is unreasonable; deceivers have great advantage; time is short. O, therefore, work while it is day! for the night cometh, when none can work. Our own sloth and sin is the most dangerous silence. How many souls feed or famish, live or die, as we do our duty, or neglect it! Can you spare your flesh or labour, when you think what impenitent souls must feel for ever, and what the sanctified shall enjoy?" \*

7. The ministers of Christ should be solemnly and officially set apart for their peculiar work and calling. In the apostolic times it would appear that several private members of the church preached occasionally, without any direct and formal appointment; and yet with good success, and with the full approbation of the church, and even of the apostles. We read, that "they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word." "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." (Acts xi. 19, 21.) It will be observed that this is said concerning these exiles generally; so that at least many of them preached, according to their ability, and that under the Divine sanction, many conversions taking place through their instrumentality. Yet we cannot suppose that all these people, amounting as they did to many thou-

\* Baxter's "Sacriligious Desertion of the Holy Ministry," p. 84. Edition of 1672.

sands, had all received an official appointment to the ministerial work.

Further light may be reflected upon this subject from the case of Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, who is often mentioned with honour in the New Testament. He was "fervent in the spirit," "eloquent," "mighty in the Scriptures," and "spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord;" and yet he "knew only the baptism of John." (Acts xviii. 24, 25.) That this gifted and useful man had never been officially ordained to the Christian ministry, either by an apostle, or by a body of presbyters—that he was neither an evangelist, like Timothy and Titus, nor the pastor of any particular church, we are warranted in concluding; for he did not properly understand the Gospel. It is therefore utterly incredible that he had been formally appointed to preach that with which he was so imperfectly acquainted. Yet he preached what he knew of Divine truth, and that apparently without censure, before Aquila and Priscilla "taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly."

In these cases we have, as I conceive, an example and justification of that auxiliary ministry which is exercised in the Wesleyan body by the local preachers. This very useful class of labourers are possessed of gifts which they are bound to employ in the service of the Lord, according to the necessities of the church, and of the world around them; and while they thus exert themselves to extend the kingdom of Christ, they are worthy of all esteem and encouragement.

But the case of the Christian minister—using that term in its full and adequate sense, the elder, the presbyter, the pastor, and bishop of the flock—is very different. He is not a mere preacher, but a pastor,



intrusted with the care of souls, of whom he must give an account to the Chief Shepherd, who redeemed them by His blood, and to whom they therefore belong. The men to whom this momentous charge is committed are always spoken of in the New Testament as having received an official and formal appointment to their work. Of Paul and Barnabas it is said, "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." (Acts xiv. 23.) Here we are taught that in each church, planted by these apostolic men, they appointed a plurality of elders, to watch over and teach the people; but how many they appointed we are not informed; probably the number varied according to the amount of converts in each place; but no church was left without pastors, nor was any church left to the care of only one man. The subject is again mentioned in Titus i. 5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."

With the particular form of ordination in these cases we are not acquainted, the Scriptures being silent on the subject. All that we know is, that the act was usually attended by fasting and prayer, as a matter of the most solemn moment, being intimately connected with the work and glory of God, and with the salvation of redeemed men. The laying on of hands, we have also every reason to believe, was invariably used in this impressive service. This form was used when the seven deacons were appointed in Jerusalem, although theirs was a subordinate office, having reference only to the application of the church's property. It was used when

Saul and Barnabas were sent forth from Antioch to preach the Gospel, and plant churches through a particular district of country; (Acts xiii. 3;) \* and it was used in the appointment of Timothy to the office and work of an evangelist. In that case there was "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," (1 Tim. iv. 14,) as well as the laying on of the hands of St. Paul; (2 Tim. i. 6;) and Timothy himself, in the ordination of ministers and pastors, was directed to "lay hands suddenly on no man;" (1 Tim. v. 22;) but to be fully satisfied concerning the piety, fidelity, and gifts of the men whom he set apart to this special service of God. There is no command in Holy Scripture that enjoins the laying on of hands in the act of ordination; and therefore we have no authority to say that this rite is essential to the valid ordination of a minister; but as the rite is recommended by Scripture precedent, and is in itself impressive and becoming, it ought not, in ordinary cases, to be omitted. Ordination, properly speaking, we apprehend, consists in the solemn and official dedication of a man to the work of the ministry; the man so dedicated having given proof of competent qualifications and of a Divine call; the act of dedication being performed by men who are themselves in the ministry, and with the concurrence and prayers of the people

\* "It is not like that the separation and imposition of hands on Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii. 2, 3) was to their first apostleship." (Baxter's "Five Disputations of Church Government," p. 189. Edition of 1659.) "The prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch must send Saul and Barnabas for the special work in which the Holy Ghost would employ them; (Acts xiii. 1, 2;) which seems to me but a secondary call to some special exercise of their former office, one way rather than another."—*Ibid.*, pp. 284, 285.

among whom he is to labour, or by whom he is sent forth.\*

When a man is thus ordained, he is "separated unto the Gospel of God;" (Acts xiii. 2; Rom. i. 1;) and is therefore denominated a "man of God:" (1 Tim. vi. 11:) that is, a man devoted to the peculiar work and service of God; for the title, "man of God," which often occurs in Holy Scripture, is never applied to anyone on account of his personal piety merely, but because of his having a Divine commission, and therefore acting in God's name.

While the minister of Christ, who is thus set apart for the work of God, labours with due fidelity and zeal, he is entitled, by the Lord's own ordinance, to his support, and that of his family. "Do ye not know," says the apostle, "that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.) This ordinance of Christ is as wise as it is just and equitable. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." (2 Tim. ii. 4.) And if a military man, in order to the efficient discharge of his peculiar duties, abstains from every other employment, however honourable or gainful it may be, how much more ought a minister of Christ to stand aloof from matters merely secular, and devote his time and powers to his proper work? The fact is, that the cares and anxieties of business are incompatible with the full discharge of ministerial and pastoral duties. A mind

\* See Note X, at the end of the volume.

that is distracted with worldly engagements is ill prepared for that close and continuous application to the study of the Bible, and that sanctifying intercourse with God in secret, which are necessary to preserve the exercises of the pulpit in their freshness and interest; and he has not sufficient time for pastoral visitation, the care of the sick, and the Christian training of youth, which these duties demand. The apostolic charge is, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself WHOLLY to them; that thy profiting may appear to all;" or, "in all things," as the marginal rendering is. (1 Tim. iv. 15.) It is not in preaching only, but "in all things" that are connected with his office, that the "profiting" of a minister should "appear." He may occasionally, and in particular emergencies, work with his own hands, as did St. Paul at Ephesus, to obtain the temporal supplies which are needful; but this is very different from engaging in schemes of worldly business, which would not only divide his attention, but often bring him into painful collision with parties to whom he is accustomed to minister the word of life, and over whom he has to exercise his pastoral charge: so that his secular engagements must directly interfere with the very objects of his ministry. On these grounds he is to be, not a man of the world, but "a man of God," pursuing the one business of saving souls.

Such is the view which the Holy Scriptures give us of the ministerial office, of the qualifications it requires, and of the manner in which it is conferred.

What, then, are the peculiar duties which this sacred office involves?

1. The first that we will mention is that of preaching

the Gospel. To understand this subject aright, we must carefully consider the various terms by which the evangelical message is designated. It is called "the Gospel;" (Mark xvi. 15;) "the Gospel of the grace of God;" (Acts xx. 24;) "the Gospel of salvation;" (Eph. i. 13;) "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God;" (1 Tim. i. 11;) "the testimony of God;" (1 Cor. ii. 1;) "the word of the Lord;" (2 Thess. iii. 1;) "the word of truth;" (Eph. i. 13;) "Christ crucified." (1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 2.) These expressions show, with sufficient clearness, the great subject of the evangelical ministry. It is not the doctrines, the commandments, or the opinions of men; not the discoveries of philosophy; but that which God has revealed in His word concerning Christ, as the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Lord and Judge of men; including the necessity, the nature, and the appointed method of salvation, with the obligations and duties of the Christian life; enforced by the mercies of redemption, and the solemn realities of the approaching judgment. These subjects, as they are presented in the Holy Scriptures, and viewed in all their principles and details, present an endless variety, so that, when rightly treated, they never pall upon the mental taste, but possess an undying interest and freshness.

The Gospel is to be preached fully. According to our Saviour's statement, "every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth out of his treasure things new and old;" (Matt. xiii. 52;) and St. Paul declares, that during the three years in which he had lived and preached in Ephesus, he had "not shunned to declare" to the people "all the counsel of



God." (Acts xx. 27.) On this ground, and on this only, could he claim to be "free from the blood of all men." He had "kept back nothing" that was spiritually and morally "profitable" to the people; but had placed before them every blessing that it was their privilege to enjoy, and enforced every duty they were required to discharge, and specified every danger against which they were to guard.

The Gospel should be preached with earnestness and zeal. In respect of his preaching at Ephesus, St. Paul makes this appeal to the men who had heard him: "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears." (Acts xx. 18, 19.) At Corinth he preached in the same spirit, anxious on his own account, lest he should fail in the fulfilment of his sacred trust; and anxious for the people, lest they should receive the Gospel message with unbelief or indifference, and so perish in a state of aggravated guilt. "I was with you," says he, "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." (1 Cor. ii. 3.) Apathy in the pulpit, and a spirit of levity out of it, are equally inconsistent with the true ministerial character. In the pulpit, as well as elsewhere, St. Paul "served the Lord with all humility of mind," never seeking to excite admiration by the brilliancy of his imagination, the depth of his learning, or the splendour of his eloquence. He lost sight of himself altogether, and thought of nothing but the honour of his Lord, and the salvation of the people.

The Gospel is to be preached plainly. The command of the Lord is, that it be preached to "every creature," because "every creature" needs the salvation which it

reveals. But a large proportion of mankind are illiterate, and therefore unacquainted with the meaning of uncommon words, technical terms, and elaborate forms of expression. Nothing can surpass the simplicity of our Lord's preaching in respect of language and manner, even when the truths which He announces are the most profound. With a special reference to His own ministry, He said, "To the poor the Gospel is preached;" (Luke vii. 22;) and it was preached in such phraseology that "the common people heard Him gladly." (Mark xii. 37.) In this respect all His apostles followed His example, using "great plainness of speech,"—"great boldness of speech," as the marginal rendering is. (2 Cor. iii. 12.) The word *παρρησία* signifies openness and publicity; for the apostles had nothing to conceal, but desired to be universally understood. St. Paul, the most learned of them all, says that he "came not with excellency of speech," and that his preaching "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom;" (1 Cor. ii. 1, 4;) for he was anxious to "commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God;" (2 Cor. iv. 2;) to the conscience of the poor man, as well as of the rich; to the conscience of the illiterate man, as well as of the man of science and erudition. The Gospel is seen to the greatest advantage when presented in its own simplicity, free from the adorning of an elaborate and artificial rhetoric.

The Gospel is also to be preached with great diligence. "I have taught you publicly, and from house to house," says the apostle of the Gentiles, "testifying to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;" (Acts xx. 20, 21;) and, addressing Timothy, his son in the Gos-

pel, he says, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.)

In preaching the Gospel, respect should always be had to the glory of Christ in the final salvation of men. To convert sinners to Christ as their Saviour, and then to build them up in faith and holy love, should be the ceaseless aim and endeavour of all who labour in the word and doctrine; for such are the great purposes of their high commission. The apostles preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; (2 Cor. iv. 5;) and the object to which their special attention was directed, and which, above all things, they sought to accomplish, is thus stated by St. Paul: "Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." (Col. i. 27, 28.) They preached Christ so as to bring the careless to repentance; the penitent to the enjoyment of forgiveness through faith in the blood of the Cross; and the happy believer to a state of perfected holiness. This was the great point to which all their ministrations were directed; and unless they succeeded in this, they felt that their ministry was a failure. With nothing less than the perfection of men in Christ, the perfection of *every man* in Christ, could the apostles ever be satisfied.

Here, then, is the rule and standard of ministerial duty, so far as preaching is concerned.

Modern episcopacy assigns to presbyters mainly the duty of preaching, and to bishops that of government,

or the maintenance of discipline ; not adverting apparently to the fact, that St. Paul gives the preference to an efficient preacher before a disciplinarian, though both are essential to the church's true prosperity. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, *especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.* For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward." (1 Tim. v. 17, 18.) Here the apostle directs that the highest respect and the most ample salary shall be given to the successful labourer "in the word and doctrine ;" that is, to the man whose public ministrations are a means of enlarging the church, and of edifying its members. Such is the man whom St. Paul places first in order.

2. The work of the ministry comprehends the conducting of God's worship in the public assemblies of His people. Christianity requires the celebration of Divine worship in public, as well as in private, according to the practice of the church from the beginning of the world. That worship includes adoration, confession of sin, the deprecation of its punishment, supplication, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise. In respect of all these parts of Divine worship, the minister is the mouth of the people in their solemn addresses to God. If a liturgy be used, he ought to read it, not as a matter of form, but in the spirit of true devotion ; and if he do not lead the singing, he is bound to see that this important part of the service shall not be superseded by instrumental music, nor the spirit of the service marred by tunes which are either light and airy, or dull and monotonous ; but that the whole is conducted with propriety, and in such a spirit as God Himself will

approve and accept. In public prayer a minister ought to put forth all the powers of his mind and heart; bringing before the Lord the wants of the congregation, of individuals, of his country, of the church, and of the world; and that in the use of appropriate expressions, and in the spirit of humility, of holy earnestness, of gratitude, and of faith. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 24.) To cultivate the gift of prayer, as well as to live in the spirit of this great duty, should be the ceaseless desire and aim of every minister of Christ; so that the public worship of God may be acceptable to Him, and conducive to the edification of His people. In public as well as private prayer no language is so appropriate as that of Holy Scripture. The public prayers of a minister should be comprehensive, embracing every form of human want, and characterized by earnestness and importunity; so as to awaken the sympathy of the congregation, and draw from them the spontaneous utterance of a hearty "Amen."

3. The ministerial office comprehends the administration of the sacraments. When the Lord Jesus commissioned His apostles to preach His Gospel, He commanded them to baptize; and His ordinary ministers have succeeded to these duties. The administration of the Lord's supper also is an equally appropriate duty of the men who are set apart for the public service of God, the whole of which ought to be conducted "decently and in order." It is often requisite in the administration of the sacraments that their covenant character should be explained, and that the people should be reminded of the right manner of receiving them: and upon whom does this duty rest, but the



minister of Christ, who is appointed to guide and lead the flock? Much depends upon the devout and orderly manner in which the sacraments are administered, so that the purposes for which they were instituted may be fully realised. The man who performs this duty with negligence and indecorum is inexcusable, and must answer for his misconduct before the judgment-seat of Christ.

4. The last duty that we will mention, as comprehended in the ministerial office, is the pastoral care and government of the church. Addressing the Ephesian elders, the apostle says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." (Acts xx. 28.) St. Peter expresses himself to the same effect: "The elders which are among you I exhort:..... feed \* the flock of God which is among you;"—or, as the margin reads, "as much as in you is;"—"taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." (1 Peter v. 1, 2.) According to apostolic teaching, then, an elder, or, which is the same, a bishop, is to "take care of the church of God." (1 Tim. iii.) To the private members of the church it is therefore said, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for this is unprofitable for you." (Heb. xiii. 17.) A similar

\* The word *ποιμαίνω*, which is here translated *feed*, and which is applied by St. Paul to the same subject, Acts xx. 28, signifies also to "rule or govern;" and is so translated in our Authorized Version, Matt. ii. 6; Rev. xii. 5; xix. 15.

exhortation is given to the members of the Thessalonian church : " We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." (1 Thess. v. 12.)

The pastoral care and government of the church, to which these and many other passages of Holy Scripture refer, are inherent in the ministerial office, as it is described in the New Testament. They constitute a sacred trust, which the servants of Christ, as under-shepherds, have received from Him, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Of the manner in which they have executed their trust they must render to Him a strict "account." The authority with which they are invested includes the admission of members into the church ; the encouragement of the timid, the weak, the afflicted ; the admonition of the lukewarm and negligent ; the reproof of offenders ; the expulsion of those that sin, and will not amend ; the religious care and training of the young ; the visitation of the sick. Children who are baptized are members of the church ; and ministers are therefore bound to see that they receive Christian instruction, in accordance with the vows which were made at their baptism. Such a government and care of the church as this requires great vigilance, so that evil may never pass unrebuked ; and great fidelity, combined with tenderness and patience, that, while sin is discountenanced and corrected, the offenders may, if possible, be reclaimed and saved. In the administration of discipline, the minister is not to act as a "lord over God's heritage," but to be "an ensample to the flock ;" being a pattern of holiness, benignity, meekness, yet firm and unyielding in matters of duty. The pastor must remember that the sheep are not his own ; they belong to

the Lord Christ ; they must therefore be governed and watched over for Him ; and the appearing of all, the minister as well as his people, before the judgment-seat of Christ, should be ever borne in mind, as a motive to fidelity. The pastoral office cannot be put into commission, nor its duties transferred to other parties, who are not in the ministry. The Holy Ghost has made the Christian presbyter a bishop or overseer of the church ; and therefore he, the presbyter himself, must give an account of every soul that has been committed to his charge.\*

“The sacred ministry,” says Baxter, “is subordinate to Christ in His teaching, governing, and priestly office, and thus essentiated by Christ’s own institution, which man hath no power to change. Therefore, under Christ, they must teach the church by sacred doctrine, guide them by that and sacred discipline, called the power of the keys ; that is, of judging who is fit to enter by baptism, to continue to partake of the communion, to be suspended, or cast out ; and to lead them in the public worship of God, interceding in prayer, and speaking for them, and administering to them the sacraments, or holy seals, of the covenant of God.”

“These officers are in Scripture called sometimes ‘elders,’ and sometimes ‘bishops,’ to whom deacons were added to serve them and the church subordonately. Dr. Hammond hath well described their office in his ‘Annotations ;’ which was to preach constantly in public and private, to administer both sacraments, to pray and praise God with the people, to catechise, to visit and pray with the sick, to comfort troubled souls, to admonish the unruly, to reject the impenitent, to restore

\* See Note Y, at the end of the volume.

the penitent, to take care of the poor, and, in a word, of all the flock." \*

"The work of a bishop or pastor of a single church is to teach the church the meaning of the Scriptures, especially of all the articles of faith, and the things to be desired in prayer, and the matters and order of obedience to all the commands of Christ; to instruct the children in the catechistical or fundamental verities:—to baptize, to pray in the assembly, to praise God, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, to visit the sick, and pray with them:—to visit the several families, or personally instruct those ignorant ones that understand not public preaching, as far as he hath opportunity:—to watch over the conversations of the several members, and to receive informations concerning them:—to resolve the doubts of those that seek resolution, and to offer help to them that are so senseless as not to seek it, when their need appeareth; to comfort the sad and afflicted; to reprove the scandalous; to admonish the obstinate before all; to censure and cast out the impenitent that continue to reject such admonition; to absolve the penitent; to take care of the poor; and to be exemplary in holiness, sobriety, justice, and charity. I pass by marriage, burials, and such other particular offices; and I meddle not here with ordination, or any thing that concerneth other churches, but only with the work of a bishop or pastor to the people of his proper flock." †

On a survey of the responsibilities which rest upon the ministers and pastors of the church, we may well inquire, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The

\* Baxter's "Church History of Bishops and their Councils," pp. 3, 5. Edition of 1680.

† Baxter's "Treatise of Episcopacy," pp. 34, 35. Edition of 1681.

answer is, He only upon whom the unction of the Holy One richly and habitually rests, enlightening his understanding, inspiring him with holy affections, sanctifying his studies, and helping his infirmities in every duty. That anointing should be sought by incessant and believing prayer, presented for him by the people of his charge, and by himself in particular. No man can acceptably do the work of Christ, but under Christ's direction and gracious aid.



### XIII.—THE OFFICE OF DEACONS.

HAVING examined the names and character of the men who were originally appointed to preach the Gospel, to administer the Christian sacraments, and maintain the discipline of the church, in the name of its Founder and Head, we proceed to the consideration of a subordinate class of officers, who are often mentioned in the New Testament: we mean the DEACONS. It may perhaps be justly doubted whether, in any of the various sections of the church in the present day, even in those that retain the name of deacons, we can find a class of officers who exactly answer to the deacons of the apostolic age. We do not mention this as matter of blame; for, as the circumstances of Christians are greatly changed, it might be fairly expected that changes would be gradually and imperceptibly introduced into their ecclesiastical arrangements, especially in respect of the office which is the subject of our present inquiry. We will endeavour to state, in a brief but comprehensive manner, the information which the Holy Scriptures contain respecting the primitive deacons, losing sight of modern opinions and practice.

#### I. With respect to their TITLE.

The term *διάκονοι*, "*deacons*," is well known to

signify "servants." Yet not servants of the lowest grade, but such servants as attended upon the persons of their masters, and supplied them with the things that were needful in order to their convenience and comfort. In the days of our blessed Lord there were two classes of servants,—the *διάκονοι*, such as we have just described ; and the *δοῦλοι*, who were slaves, the property of their masters, and often subjected to the deepest degradation, with respect both to labour and suffering. The slaves were frequently employed in the meanest services, and often treated with less humanity than a favourite animal.

The distinction between these two classes of servants is recognised by our blessed Lord, when enforcing upon His disciples the duty of humility in their conduct towards one another. "Whosoever will be GREAT among YOU," says He, "let him be your" *διάκονος*, "MINISTER ; and whosoever will be CHIEF among YOU, let him be your" *δοῦλος*, "SERVANT," or "SLAVE." (Matt. xx. 26, 27.) To understand this admonition correctly, we must recollect that our Lord's disciples often claimed superiority over one another ; and, to check their ambitious aspirings, He told them that, according to the constitution of His kingdom, and the genius of His religion, the man is GREAT who renders service to His brethren in any form or degree ; but that he is the GREATEST, who is the most humble, the most self-denying, and the most benevolent, serving them with an entire devotion, and submitting to the lowest abasement for their honour and advantage. Here the distinction between the servant and the slave is pointed out : and it is observable that the name of "deacons" in the church is derived, not from the "slave," but the "ser-

vant ;” intimating that the office of a deacon in the church, though subordinate, is not abject.

II. The original appointment of deacons, as a distinct class of officers in the Christian church, is described Acts vi. 1–6 : “ And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude : and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch : whom they set before the apostles : and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.”

1. Two classes of people are here mentioned as constituting the church at Jerusalem,—Hebrews and Grecians. By “Grecians” we are not to understand heathen Greeks who had embraced Christianity ; but Jews who spoke the Greek language ; having most probably been born in countries where Greek was commonly used : for no Gentiles had as yet been admitted into the church ; Cornelius and his family being the first Gentiles of whom we read as having believed and been baptized. Up to this period all the Christians were either Jews by birth, or proselytes to the Jews’ religion.

2. The seven men who were selected by the church,

and then formally appointed by the apostles, were to watch over the temporal interests of the poor members, who were supported out of a common fund. They were to "serve tables," and thus leave the apostles at liberty to pursue their spiritual duties without interruption; giving themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. The seven were to apply the common property of the church to the support of the poor. Their office was therefore sacred, and involved considerable responsibility: the men were therefore solemnly appointed to it by prayer and the imposition of hands. They are not called "deacons" by the inspired historian, who relates their appointment; but they are so denominated in the running title which is placed at the head of the chapter which records the transaction, and the service assigned them agrees with the name, as we find it applied to a class of officers whom we afterwards find in other Christian churches, and who are so denominated.

3. The spirit which was manifested by the apostles and by the whole church in this case was every way admirable. The complaint which led to the appointment of the seven was, that the Grecian widows were "neglected" in the daily distribution of money or of food; and the entire assembly, of their own accord, appear to have chosen none but Grecians to sustain the new office which the apostles proposed to create. This we infer from the names of the men; not one of which is of Hebrew origin. We therefore conclude that, with the exception of Nicolas, who was "a proselyte of Antioch," the seven were all Jews of the dispersion: and if so, then the Hebrew widows themselves were placed under the care of Grecian officers. Such was

the mutual confidence that subsisted between these two classes of primitive believers. If this be a just view of the subject, then we are warranted in regarding the neglect of the Grecian widows, of which complaint was made, rather as an inadvertency than as the result of unkindness, or of intended partiality, on the part of the Hebrews.

4. The church at Jerusalem was not peculiar with respect to the appointment of these men. For a time that church had "all things in common," and therefore with them the services of public officers were indispensable. But in other churches; where there was not the same community of goods, such officers were also appointed, and to them the name of "deacons" was applied. When writing to the church at Philippi, St. Paul salutes "the bishops and deacons;" and when Timothy was left in Ephesus, for the purpose of organizing the church in that city, he was evidently intended to ordain deacons, as well as bishops; for the qualifications of both are minutely described by St. Paul in the instructions which he sent to Timothy on the occasion. (1 Tim. iii. 8-13.) It is therefore evident that the office of a deacon had respect to something more than the mere community of goods. It had respect to the general management of the church's property.

III. With regard to the qualifications of deacons, ample information is given in the New Testament.

The selection of the deacons in Jerusalem was left by the apostles with the body of the believers; only it was said that the men who were to be chosen should be persons of "honest report:" that is, men whose integrity of character was such as to have excited observation, commanded respect, and been matter of public



testimony ; for no man of dubious principles and reputation was suited to an office of this kind ; nor was it proper that such a man should receive the sanction of the apostles of Christ.

They were also to be “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom :” that is, at least, they were to be men of deep and established piety, the effect of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling and operation ; having, at the same time, “wisdom” to discern that which was just and right, with the best means of accomplishing it. They needed both piety and discretion ; so that in the discharge of their official duties they might do everything in the best manner, neither giving offence nor taking it.

St. Paul’s description of what a deacon ought to be is exactly similar to this in its leading features, only more full and extended. Having specified the qualifications of a bishop, the apostle adds, “Likewise must the deacons be grave :” that is, men of sober, serious, and decent behaviour ; not light and vain, but deeply impressed with the momentous verities of Christianity, and living habitually under their influence.

“Not double-tongued :” that is, strictly adhering to truth in all verbal communications ; not assenting to sin and error to please one class of people, and condemning them to please another ; not flattering men in their presence, and censuring them in their absence ; but maintaining a pure, consistent, and truthful conversation in all companies, and upon all occasions, as the servants of God and of His church.

“Not given to much wine ;” but practising strict temperance ; using wine occasionally, if it be needful, for the purpose of refreshment and health, and not as a

means of gratifying the cravings of an unnatural appetite, bent upon sensual indulgence.

“Not greedy of filthy lucre.” Lucre is worldly gain; and is here described as “filthy,” because it is often obtained by sinful and dishonourable means, such as fraud and injustice; and because the love of it defiles the soul in the sight of God, rendering men unfit for His worship, both upon earth and in heaven. To be “greedy” of this, having an eager appetite for it, is inconsistent with the Christian character. The man who is under the power of such a feeling, is a scandal to the Christian name, and cannot be safely intrusted with the church’s property. His love of money, as in the case of Judas, will in all probability lead him to appropriate to his own use that which belongs to God’s poor.

“Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.” By “the faith” here mentioned, we are doubtless to understand the system of evangelical doctrine, which is revealed to “faith,” or made known that it may be believed. It is called a “mystery,” because many of the great truths which it embodies were hid from former generations, being only set forth in dark symbols, and promises which did not adequately express the subjects to which they referred. The deacons, as public officers in the church, were to “hold” this system in its simplicity, uncontaminated by error, and with “a pure conscience,” fulfilling all its requirements with unswerving fidelity. Their belief and practice were to be equally pure, firm, and uncorrupt.

“And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.” The

characters of the men were to be tested, before the men themselves received a direct and formal appointment; and only those who were found "blameless" were to be trusted with an office which involved the interests of many, and even the public credit of Christianity. The mode of trial, and the time of its continuance, were left to circumstances, and to the Christian wisdom of the parties concerned.

"Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." As a deacon was a public and recognised officer in the church, it was requisite that his family should be an example of all that is orderly, pure, and blameless, conveying a lesson of useful instruction to all the other members of the church, and commanding general confidence and esteem.

"Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well;" practising no polygamy, like the Jews and heathens, and tolerating in their families no ungodliness and sin.

It is observable with what care St. Paul guards the purity of the church. He requires the humblest member of it to "depart from iniquity," and much more its ministers of every kind; so that the truth should be recommended by the conduct of all its professors, as well as by its innate beauty and its external evidences.

IV. The peculiar duties of the deacons in the apostolic churches claim our next attention.

It is observable that in the description of their qualifications no mention is made of their ability to teach; they are never spoken of as sustaining the pastoral charge; nor are they classed with the ministers whom Christ has directly given to His church and the world. They are not mentioned in immediate connexion with

apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. (Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 28.) It is therefore clear that theirs was a subordinate office; and that their duties, though connected with the church, were rather secular than strictly spiritual. That several of the primitive deacons preached, we have every reason to believe; just as, in the Wesleyan-Methodist Connexion, Society-stewards, Circuit-stewards, and treasurers of various pious and charitable funds, are local preachers: but it does not appear that it was in the character of deacons that they preached, any more than the Methodist local preachers minister the word of life in the character of treasurers and stewards.

We have seen the original appointment of "the seven" in the church at Jerusalem. They were explicitly and avowedly intended to relieve the apostles from secular cares; yet we find St. Stephen, who was one of them, engaged in the maintenance of evangelical truth, so as even to call forth the opposition of unbelievers, who were not able to resist the power and wisdom with which he spoke in defence of Christianity. We see also something of his zeal and ability as a Christian apologist, in his address to the Jewish council, (Acts vii.,) and can have no hesitation in saying that a man who could speak in this manner was able to preach the Gospel, both to the edification of the church, and the conviction of ungodly men. And being able to expound and defend the Gospel, of course he did expound and defend it as occasion served; for every friend of Christ is bound to use the talents that are committed to him in the furtherance of his Lord's work and honour. We therefore see the correctness of Mr. Wesley's note on Philip. i. 1: "The 'bishops' properly took care of the internal

state, the ‘deacons’ of the externals, of the church; although these were not wholly confined to the one, neither those to the other.” Stephen, in addition to his secular duties in connexion with the church, explained and defended the Gospel of Christ; and the sums of money which the Christians at Antioch raised for the relief of the believing Jews in Jerusalem, they sent not directly to “the seven,” but to the elders, or presbyters, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. (Acts xi. 30.) Deacons, then, were sometimes publicly employed in spiritual duties; and the presbyters, upon whom such duties specially devolved, were not unmindful of the right application of the church’s funds, and of the wants of the poor.

We have seen what were the official duties of “the seven” whom we regard as deacons in Jerusalem, where the church had a community of goods: and it is natural to inquire what their duties were in the other churches; for every church, when fully organized, had its deacons, as well as its presbyters, or bishops, who were its spiritual pastors. We shall doubtless be able to give a just answer to this question, when we have ascertained the purposes for which funds were raised by the churches in their collective capacity. Let it then be observed,—

1. That the Lord had “ordained that those who preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel.” (1 Cor. ix. 14.) While the churches, therefore, enjoyed the benefit of an evangelical ministry, they were bound to provide the necessities of life for the men who served them in the Lord, many of whom had also families dependent upon them. The deacons were doubtless employed in collecting the sums which were requisite



for this purpose; the labourer being then, as now, worthy of his hire.

2. In those times, the care of the poor was also regarded as a sacred duty. Among the heathen, there were no laws which levied rates upon the people generally for the support of the destitute. On the contrary, the aged and the hopelessly infirm were often left to perish; the people being, in many instances, "without natural affection," as well as "implacable and unmerciful." The Gospel invests human life with a peculiar sacredness, and enjoins upon all men the duty of showing kindness to the poor for the Lord's sake. That Christian churches, therefore, as such, raised funds for their support, is indubitable. Hence the statement of St. Paul: "When James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do." (Gal. ii. 9, 10.) Here the subject of providing for the poor is mentioned in general terms, as a duty which the ministers of Christ were bound to enforce, and their hearers to practise. The following text speaks definitely on the point: "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not THE CHURCH be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." (1 Tim. v. 16.) Hence we conclude that when Christian widows, who were left in helplessness and destitution, had no near relations to befriend them, the several churches with which they were connected became answerable for their support. And if widows

were thus cared for, old men, and other persons disabled by sickness and infirmity, would not be forgotten, and much less neglected. In an age when Jews and heathens rivalled each other in hostility to the cause and followers of Christ, there were probably few churches that had not supplied martyrs to the truth; and, of course, the churches would feel themselves specially bound to provide for the widows and children of those who had been "slain for the testimony which they held." Christian prisoners, also, shut up in dungeons for the Lord's sake, would need the church's aid. Here, then, again, there was employment for the deacons, whose business it doubtless was to collect the requisite supplies, and see that they were rightly administered.

3. There is also reason to believe that at least some of the early churches raised considerable sums of money for the advancement of the cause of Christ in the world. Missionaries then, as well as now, "for His name's sake, went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought," said St. John to the churches of his time, "to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth." Such men Gaius is said to have "brought forward" on their way, "after a godly sort;" or, in a manner "worthy of God," whose servants they were, as the marginal rendering is. (3 John 6-8.) When St. Paul was engaged in his missionary work, the Philippian church sent once and again to his necessity; (Phil. iv. 16;) and when he was imprisoned at Rome, they communicated with his affliction, by sending him effectual relief from the funds of the church. Hence his grateful acknowledgment: "I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things

which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." (Phil. iv. 18.) Here again, then, we see the kind of service in which we have reason to believe the Christian deacons were employed. When Paul and Barnabas, with certain others, went from Antioch to Jerusalem, to consult the apostles and elders there on the litigated question of the circumcision of the Gentile converts, they were "brought on their way by the church," (Acts xv. 3,) and not at their own expense.

4. There were also several miscellaneous duties which, in all probability, devolved upon the deacons in the apostolic churches; such as preparing rooms for religious meetings, for no strictly ecclesiastical buildings were then erected; providing for the administration of the Lord's supper, and for the lovefeast which accompanied it, and in which the Christians all partook of a substantial and friendly meal together, the rich and the poor forming an affectionate and happy "brotherhood."

5. It has been thought, and not without probability, that in some of the apostolical churches, at least, there were female deacons. Mention is made of "Phebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea;" (Rom. xvi. 1;) and of the pious women, Tryphena and Tryphosa, who "laboured in the Lord;" as well as of "the beloved Persis, who laboured much in the Lord." (Rom. xvi. 12.) They were probably employed in providing accommodation for Christian strangers in their journeys, especially apostles and evangelists; in visiting the sick; distributing the church's alms; and in giving Christian instruction and encouragement to young converts, and the less established believers, of their own sex.

We may add, that the office of a deacon, when its duties were well discharged, appears to have led to services of greater distinction in the church. Philip, who was one of the seven deacons in the church at Jerusalem, we find afterwards sustaining the higher office of an evangelist, and as eminently successful in the conversion of men. He preached Christ to the people of Samaria, confirmed his ministry by miracles, and saw multitudes of people, through his instrumentality, turned to the Lord. He had also the high honour of being sent by an angel to carry the Gospel message to the noble Ethiopian; who, having received the truth in the love of it, "went on his way rejoicing." (Acts viii. 5-8, 26-40.) The history of this very zealous and faithful man presents a beautiful comment upon the words of St. Paul: "They that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. iii. 13.)

#### XIV.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS.

THE next subject that comes in order before us is the Scripture doctrine of the SACRAMENTS: a subject concerning which there has been much controversy among the various denominations of Christians, and in respect of which there is a great danger of extremes. We shall find that the truth lies in the just medium, between Socinian Rationalism, on the one hand, which refuses to receive the truth and ordinances of Christ in their scriptural integrity, and the presumption of Popery on the other; which makes unauthorised and pernicious additions to the Gospel and institutions of Christ. We shall not greatly err in our investigation of the subject, if we adhere to the simple teaching of Holy Scripture.

The term "sacrament" is applied to some of the ordinances of God, which possess a distinct and peculiar character. The sacraments are ordinances of Divine appointment: but all ordinances of Divine appointment are not sacraments; the sacraments being, as we have just said, ordinances of a special and peculiar kind. They have a symbolical and a covenant character, as we shall take occasion to show.

I. Our first inquiry will relate to the meaning of the word "sacrament," and the reason of its application to



some of the ordinances of God. The word is of Latin origin, being derived from *sacramentum*; a term which the ancient Romans used in a very extensive sense.

1. They used it to denote a deposit which was placed in the hand of a *pontifex*, or superior priest, by every one who engaged in a suit against another in a court of law. The practice of doing this was apparently intended to check the spirit of litigation; for if the man lost his suit, the deposit was forfeited, and applied to some public and sacred purpose. In this case the *sacramentum* was a pledge given by the client, that he considered his cause to be good and valid; for he knew that if any dishonesty were detected in the investigation, so that the cause was decided against him, the money which he had advanced to the *pontifex* was forfeited. There was, therefore, something sacred in this deposit. It declared the suitor's persuasion of the justice of his cause; and it was applied to a sacred purpose, if that justice should not be made apparent in the course of the trial. The deposit which was advanced in these circumstances was called a *sacramentum*.

2. The term *sacramentum* was applied to an oath, and especially to the oath which was taken by the Roman soldiers, binding themselves to be faithful to their commanders, and to the commonwealth. "The levies being finished, the tribunes of every legion chose out one whom they thought the fittest person, and gave him a solemn oath at large; the substance of which was, that he should oblige himself to obey the commanders in all things, to the utmost of his power, be ready to attend whenever they ordered his appearance, and never to leave the army but by their consent. After he had ended, the whole legion, passing one by

one, every man swore to the same effect; crying, as he went by, '*Idem in me!*'" \* "Under the emperors, the name of the prince was inserted in the military oath; and this oath used to be renewed every year on their birthday, by the soldiers and people in the provinces." † "The military oath was, according to Dionysius, the most sacred of all; and the law allowed a general to put to death, without a formal trial, any soldier who ventured to act contrary to his oath." "In the time of the empire, a clause was added to the military oath, in which the soldiers declared that they would consider the safety of the emperor more important than anything else, and that they loved neither themselves nor their children more than their sovereign." ‡ This oath, by which the soldiers of ancient Rome bound themselves to the emperor and their commanders, was also called *sacramentum*; and "whence was it that the term *sacramentum* was universally adopted in the Latin church, except from the analogy of a military oath?" §

3. The term *sacramentum* was used by the fathers of the Latin church as the translation of the Greek word *μυστήριον*, or "mystery." For instance, in Rev. i. 20, "the mystery of the seven stars," which John saw in the right hand of Christ, and of "the seven golden candlesticks," in the midst of which he saw the Lord walking, is explained as signifying "the angels of the seven churches," and "the seven churches." In

\* Kennet's "Roman Antiquities," part ii., book iv., chap. 3.

† Adam's "Roman Antiquities," p. 365.

‡ Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities," p. 662. Edition of 1856.

§ Burton's "Bampton Lectures," p. 219. Edition of 1829.

the Latin Vulgate the text is rendered, "*sacramentum septem stellarum*," "the sacrament of the seven stars," and of "the seven churches." There is a mystery, or a secret, in every symbol; a symbol having relation to something distinct from itself. The Greeks called that something "a mystery," and the Latins "a sacrament;" both the words in this connexion meaning "a secret;" a something which was concealed, or hidden, and which must be revealed, in order that the entire subject might be understood. It is with a reference to these ancient forms of expression that the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are called, in the communion service of the Church of England, "these holy mysteries;" meaning, these symbols of our Saviour's body and blood.

4. The word *sacramentum* was also used by the Romans in the sense of a bond, or covenant. When parties had entered into an agreement with one another, and pledged themselves to the performance of certain specified conditions, the entire stipulation was called *sacramentum*. It was not to be thought lightly of, or trifled with, but fulfilled.

It is therefore clear, from the nature of all these particulars, that the word *sacramentum*, from which our word "sacrament" is derived, denotes something that is eminently and specially sacred. The man who engaged in a lawsuit solemnly declared his belief of the righteousness of his cause, when he placed his *sacramentum* in the hands of a priest, with a distinct understanding that it was to be forfeited, if he should be condemned or defeated. A pledge given in such circumstances was a sacred thing. An oath was also considered as sacred, and that in a high degree; perjury

having always been regarded as one of the foulest crimes, involving not only the guilt of lying, but of direct impiety, calling upon God to witness a known falsehood. Mysteries connected with religion have no less been always held to possess a peculiar sacredness, so that from them the profane were warned to stand aloof. The same may be said of covenants and agreements, which in ancient times were often ratified by rites of the most solemn and awful kind.

II. Our second inquiry relates to the true nature of a sacrament in the theological sense. In other words, what is that term used to denote in Christian theology?

We may here with advantage consider the views concerning a sacrament which have been given by men who have attained to eminence in the knowledge of divinity, and those which are embodied in the formularies of the principal Protestant churches.

Calvin gives the following definition of a sacrament : “It is an outward sign, by which the Lord seals in our consciences the promises of His good-will towards us, to support the weakness of our faith ; and we, on our part, testify our piety towards Him, in His presence and that of angels, as well as before men. It may, however, be more briefly defined ; in other words, by calling it ‘a testimony of the grace of God towards us, confirmed by an outward sign, with a reciprocal attestation of our piety towards Him.’ Whichever of these definitions be chosen, it conveys exactly the same meaning as that of Augustine, which states a sacrament to be ‘a visible sign of a sacred thing ;’ or, ‘a visible form of invisible grace :’ but it expresses the thing itself with more clearness and precision ; for, as his conciseness gives some obscurity, by which many inexperienced persons

may be misled, I have endeavoured to render the subject plainer by more words, that no room might be left for doubt." \*

Mr. George Lawson thus expresses himself on the subject. Having observed that a sacrament is a confirmation of the covenant of grace to men, he says, "This confirmation is expressed by the word 'SEAL:' as when circumcision is said to be not only a sign, as all ceremonies are, but a seal. (Rom. iv. 11.) There are many kinds of seals, and many uses and ends of them; but one usual seal is a confirming seal; and the end and use of it is to confirm covenants, deeds, grants. For whether the deed be indenture, or will, or a patent and free grant, whether absolute or conditional, we first express and signify our mind's consent and approbation by words and writings; and then we add our hands and seals: which sealing is the highest and most solemn testification of our consent, and the greatest confirmation that we can give; and, being produced, is the most perfect evidence and proof of our title being an authentical record. And in this respect a sacrament is a seal for confirmation; and it is a seal in respect of God and man.

"1. In respect of God; who by His very institution of it intended to confirm His consent unto, and approbation of, the promises upon the conditions expressed, and acknowledgeth His engagement to the performance of the promise.

"2. In respect of man; who by receiving and celebrating the sacrament solemnly testifies his approbation of the conditions, and doth further engage himself to

\* "Institutes," book iv., chap. xiv., sect. 1.



the performance of them. The thing confirmed by the sacrament is,—

“(1.) The covenant itself, both in respect of God and man; for it confirms God’s promise of mercy, and man’s engagement to duty.

“(2.) If the mutual promises and engagements be confirmed, a conditional right to the mercies promised is made sure to man; and the conditional performance of duty in man is confirmed to God.” \*

In the Heidelberg Catechism, which was drawn up for the use of the churches in the Palatinate, and was published in the year 1563, we have the following question and answer :—

“What are the sacraments ?

“They are sacred and visible signs and seals, ordained by God Himself for this cause, that He may declare and seal up as it were by them the promise of the Gospel unto us; namely, that He gives freely the remission of sins and everlasting life, not only to all in general, but to every one that believeth, for that one sacrifice of Christ made upon the cross.”

The Westminster Confession of Faith, which has been adopted by the Church of Scotland, states the matter thus :—“Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him; as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His word.”

The same view substantially is given in the Catechism of the Church of England :—

\* Lawson’s “*Theo-Politica*,” pp. 332, 333. Second Edition.

“What meanest thou by this word ‘sacrament?’”

“I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.”

In these definitions and descriptions of a sacrament we observe a variation of expression, and probably some slight discrepancy in the meaning; but with respect to three points they are all in perfect agreement; and the three points to which we refer are the things which constitute a sacrament. A sacrament is a sign, a seal, and as such is instituted by God.

1. A sacrament is a SIGN of evangelical truth and of spiritual blessings. According to the documents just quoted, a sacrament is “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace;” sacraments “are sacred and visible signs;” they are “holy signs,” “to represent Christ and His benefits;” “a sacrament is an outward sign,” “to support the weakness of our faith.” Let us apply the principle thus laid down to baptism and the Lord’s supper.

One of the greatest blessings secured to mankind by the covenant of grace is the gift of the Holy Spirit, sanctifying their nature, and making them inwardly and outwardly holy: an effect which is directly symbolized by baptism. Water is one principal means of bodily purification; and the Holy Spirit is the direct cause of all spiritual and moral purity. Sanctification by the Holy Spirit is therefore called “baptism,” because it is the great blessing that baptism symbolizes. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” (Matt. iii. 11.) Baptism is a sign of our regeneration,—which is a spiritual washing,—and of the renewing of

the Holy Ghost, by which our moral nature is changed, and we are made pure and holy.

In the same manner the bread and wine in the Lord's supper are signs or symbols of His body and blood; His body being mangled by crucifixion, and His blood poured out in sacrifice for our sins. Our eating of the bread, and our drinking of the wine, are signs or symbols of a personal and appropriating faith in Him as an atoning sacrifice; such faith being described by our Lord Himself as an eating of His flesh, and a drinking of His blood. (John vi. 51-57.) "The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." This is not a description of the Lord's supper, and of the benefits which it directly and necessarily conveys to those who partake of it, as some mistaken theologians have supposed; but is a strong and expressive representation of Christ's atoning death, and of that personal and appropriating faith in his death, by which its benefits are actually realised. When these words were uttered, the Lord's supper had not been instituted.

In the appointment of these sacred signs we see the

mercy and condescension of God strikingly displayed. The truths which these signs represent are, indeed, clearly expressed in the letter of the Gospel; but, to aid the apprehensions of men, even of the most ignorant and barbarous, and to confirm the faith of all, God has placed before us the great and leading truths of the Gospel, upon which our salvation is made to depend, in a sensible and tangible form; so that we can, as it were, *see* them, *taste* them, and *lay our hands* upon them. On this subject Calvin has justly said, "As we are corporeal, always creeping on the ground, cleaving to terrestrial and carnal objects, and incapable of understanding or conceiving of anything of a spiritual nature, our merciful Lord, in His infinite indulgence, accommodates Himself to our capacity, condescending to lead us to Himself even by these earthly elements, and in the flesh itself to present to us a mirror of spiritual blessings. 'For if we were incorporeal,' as Chrysostom says, 'He would have given us these things pure and incorporeal.' Now, because we have souls enclosed in bodies, He gives us spiritual blessings under visible emblems. Not because there are such qualities in the nature of the things presented to us in the sacraments; but because they have been designated by God to this signification." \*

This is the first view that is to be taken of a sacrament. It is a sign of spiritual truths and blessings. There is in it more than meets the eye. There was a hidden meaning in circumcision. It represented the sanctification of the heart. (Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6.) There is a hidden meaning in the water of baptism. It represents our purification from the pollution of sin by the operation of the Holy Spirit. There is a hidden mean-

\* "Institutes," book iv., chap. xiv., sect. 3.

ing in the sacred elements of the Lord's supper. They represent to us the body and blood of Christ, offered in sacrifice for our sins; that, believing in Him, we may obtain eternal life. On this account the Greek fathers called the sacraments "mysteries;" and the Church of England uses the same term with respect to the Lord's supper. "Almighty and ever-living God, we most heartily thank Thee, for that Thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these *holy mysteries*, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ." \*

2. According to the extracts we have made from theological writers and Confessions of Faith, a sacrament is a SEAL of God's covenant with men, as well as a sign of spiritual truths and blessings. The authority for the use of this term is Rom. iv. 11, where the apostle says, concerning Abraham, "He received the sign of circumcision, a SEAL of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised." Circumcision was a sacrament to Abraham; and an inspired apostle declares it to have been both a sign and a seal: nor have we any authority to give a different view of the Christian sacraments. The Church of Rome maintains that the sacraments actually and necessarily confer the grace which they represent; and some Protestant theologians, thinking that if the Christian sacraments are seals, as well as a sign, the Popish doctrine must follow as a matter of course, have refused to consider them in any other light than that of signs or symbols. But we ought indeed to pause before we abandon the use of a Scripture term in a case of this nature. Nor is there, as we conceive, any just room for doubt or hesitation. When we say that the sacraments are seals, we do not



mean to say that baptism, in every instance of its administration, necessarily conveys regenerating grace; nor do we mean to say that every one who receives the bread and wine of the Lord's supper is actually pardoned by God, and made one with Christ; for the reverse of this is notoriously the fact. What is meant, and what we conceive the Scriptures distinctly teach, is this: That the sacraments are seals of the covenant of grace. In that covenant God has promised to give pardon, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life, to all penitent and obedient believers; and He has given the sacraments as seals of that covenant, in the sense of pledges, tokens, attestations of His love, and of His unchangeable purpose to fulfil His word. When we receive the sacraments in a right spirit, and with a just apprehension of their meaning, we accept these pledges, tokens, attestations; we declare our compliance with the specified conditions of the covenant; and we claim its blessings as our own. But if we falter, or are insincere in these engagements, the promised blessings are withheld. God is true, but men are often faithless. Yet to a sincere believer the sacraments are a ground of great encouragement. He has not only the promise of God as the warrant of his trust, but the tangible seal of God's fidelity and love. We may, indeed, apply to the sacraments what the apostle has said respecting the oath of God, Heb. vi. 17: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by" His sacraments: "that by two immutable things,"—the word of promise and the tangible pledge of God,—"in which it was impossible for Him to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold

of the hope set before us." To this subject we may also adapt a couplet in one of our incomparable hymns, especially at the table of the Lord, and on receiving the sacred elements :—

"I own His PLEDGE, accept the SIGN,  
And shout to prove the Saviour MINE!"

3. The third thing that is requisite to constitute a sacrament is the ordination of God. No man has a right of himself to appoint anything as a sign of God's grace and truth, and as a seal of God's covenant. As the covenant of grace was originated by God, and revealed by Him, so it is His prerogative exclusively to appoint the sacraments of it. He gave Abraham the sacrament of circumcision, both as a sign and a seal of His faithfulness and mercy; and He has given us the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper for the same gracious purpose. They are His ordinances, instituted at once for the instruction and encouragement of mankind; and woe to the man who has the rashness and presumption to alter them, or to set them aside.

III. The next inquiry relative to the subject before us relates to the number of the Christian sacraments.

On this question it is well known that the various Protestant churches are at issue with the Church of Rome; which declares that there are seven sacraments, while the Protestant communities contend that there are only two. The five additional ones, which the Church of Rome asserts, are confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction. We will examine them in order, and show that not one of them possesses a sacramental character.

1. Confirmation has been retained by the Church of England, where the ceremony consists in the imposition

of the bishop's hands, and prayer ; a pledge having been previously taken from the candidates, that they will be faithful to their baptismal vow. Confirmation, as it is administered by the Romish prelates, consists in making the sign of the cross upon the foreheads of the candidates, the anointing of them with scented oil, and giving to each of them a slight blow upon the cheek, as an indication that they must prepare to bear the trials of the Christian life. To call these ceremonies a sacrament is an abuse of language, and an insult to the human understanding. As there is no mention of them in Holy Scripture, God has never instituted them ; and therefore He has never made them either signs of spiritual truths, or pledges of His faithfulness and love. The entire ceremony is of merely human authority, and, as such, possesses no sacramental character whatever. Men have of themselves no more authority to create sacraments than they have to originate covenants between God and them. It is said, indeed, that Paul and Silas "went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches ;" (Acts xv. 41 ;) but there is no reason to suppose that the confirmation which they administered consisted in anything more than a faithful exposition of the Gospel, with encouragement to the people to live in the belief and practice of it ; for it is added, "And so were the churches ESTABLISHED in the FAITH, and increased in number daily." (Acts xvi. 5.) Whether these effects follow the confirmations we have just described, we leave other parties to declare.

2. The term "penance," as it is used in the formularies of the Church of Rome, relates to those who have committed sin after baptism, and is explained as denoting three things :—inward sorrow for sin ; outward

expressions of it ; and priestly absolution. Among outward expressions of sorrow are included, not only restitution, and an application to religious and moral duty, but self-inflicted torment, such as wearing a hair-shirt, iron hoops next the skin, and other modes of torture. For such torments as these, the only authority is the practice of heathenism ; and the Hindoo fakir, in the use of such rites, will far surpass the Popish devotee. Nor is there any authority in God's word for the practice of priestly absolution. The ministers of Christ are authorised to declare the terms of forgiveness with God, as they are laid down in the Gospel ; and they have authority to receive again into the church those persons who have been excluded on account of their delinquencies ; but beyond this limit their powers do not extend, so far as the forgiveness of sin is concerned. There is no true forgiveness but through faith in the blood of Christ ; a faith exercised in a penitent state of the heart ; and of the requisite penitence and faith God only is the Judge. From Him only therefore can forgiveness be received. Priestly absolution, as it is generally understood, is vain with respect to the receiver, and an act of criminal presumption on the part of the man who takes upon himself to usurp the prerogative of God in the declaration of it ; and can therefore be no sacrament of grace. If by "penance" anything more than repentance be meant, it is no sacrament, because the Scripture knows it not. If by "penance" repentance be really meant, still it can be no sacrament, because it is no sign of spiritual truths and blessing, and no seal of God's covenant. It is clear, therefore, that penance and priestly absolution, whether considered separately or unitedly, are no sacrament in any just and proper sense of that term.

3. By the orders which the Church of Rome has exalted into a sacrament is meant ordination to the Christian ministry, in what are considered its various departments and degrees. This term is applied not only to the ordination of bishops, priests, and deacons, but also to that of several subordinate officers, such as subdeacons, acolytes, exorcists, readers, and porters. The ordination of such officers is attended by various ceremonies, as anointing with oil, &c. With their ordination the parties are supposed to be invested with a peculiar character, which can never be obliterated, and to receive corresponding powers of a supernatural kind. That the ministers of Christ's Gospel, and the pastors of His flock, should be formally appointed to their office and work, is directed by an apostle ; but the precise form of ordination he has not prescribed ; nor has he spoken of such ordination as a sacrament. It is no sign of truth and grace, and no confirming seal of God's covenant ; but simply a solemn and official separation of men to the evangelical ministry. The gifts and the piety which are requisite for a minister of Christ he ought to have previously received, and to have given satisfactory proofs that he possessed them, as well as of a Divine call to the sacred office.

4. As to matrimony, which the Church of Rome has elevated into one of the sacraments of the Christian dispensation, that was instituted in the Garden of Eden, before sin had been committed by any human being, before the promise of a Saviour was given, and before the covenant of grace was either needed or revealed. Its immediate object was the increase of the happiness of man, and the multiplication of the human race. It is true that the marriage relation is adduced by St. Paul to illustrate



the union which subsists between Christ and the church ; (Eph. v. 23–32 ; ) but the vine and the branches are referred to by our blessed Lord for the same purpose ; (John xv. 1–9 ; ) and it might just as well be said that every vine is a sacrament. Marriage serves to convey to the minds of men a just conception of the near relation in which Christ and the church stand to each other ; but it is no pledge and seal of the evangelical covenant, nor was it instituted for any such purpose. Contradiction and inconsistency are among the notorious characteristics of error ; and they were never more manifest than in the Popish tenet of sacramental matrimony. The Church of Rome declares matrimony to be a sacrament, and yet teaches that the married state is less holy than that of celibacy. She therefore denies marriage to the whole of her priesthood ; and at the same time she recommends to her laity to abstain from the marriage relation, and retire into monasteries and convents, under a vow of perpetual celibacy, as a means of attaining to the highest state of spiritual perfection. So that one of her sacraments, instead of promoting holiness, confessedly interferes with personal holiness in its most exalted state ! “ Out of thine own mouth ” art thou condemned, thou great corrupter of revealed truth !

5. Extreme unction, which is the last of the Popish sacraments, is the ceremony of anointing a dying person, when all hope of recovery is gone. It is said to be a means of imparting grace to the soul preparatory to its entrance into eternity. The plea which is usually urged in defence of this ceremony is derived from James v. 14, 15 : “ Is any sick among you ? let him call for the elders of the church ; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord :

and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." But here we observe a direct discrepancy between the teaching of the apostle, and that of the Papal Church. According to St. James, the visit of the elders, the anointing of the sick with oil, and the prayer of faith that accompanies it, all have reference to the recovery of the afflicted man. "The Lord shall raise him up," and his sins "shall be forgiven him." The anointing of the sick man, according to the doctrine of the Romish Church, is performed for the purpose of conveying grace to the patient, of which there is not a word in the sacred text; and the ceremony of extreme unction, as the very name intimates, is never resorted to but in the immediate prospect of dissolution. Here, again, then we have another example of a human ordinance miscalled a sacrament of God.

On a review of the subject, therefore, we come to the conclusion of the Church of England, as it is expressed in her Catechism: "How many sacraments hath Christ ordained in His church? Two only, as generally necessary to salvation; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord?"

The Church adds, in the twenty-fifth Article, "Those five commonly called 'sacraments,' that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of sacraments with baptism and the Lord's supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of

God.” A remarkable example of what is here called “a *corrupt* following of the apostles,” we have in the practice of extreme unction, which professes to be an imitation of apostolic example, but is, in fact, a senseless departure from it.

IV. A fourth question which offers itself in respect of the subject before us relates to the PERPETUITY of the sacraments. Were they intended by their Divine Author to be of only temporary continuance, or to remain to the end of the world?

On this point, it is well known, orthodox Christians in general are at issue with the people called Quakers. This class of professed Christians, believing the Scriptures, confess, of course, the institution of baptism and of the Lord’s supper by Jesus Christ; but they contend that these ordinances were only intended to remain during the infancy of the Christian church; and that the things which these ordinances were appointed to symbolise being now better understood, the symbols are no longer needed, and are, indeed, neither binding upon Christians, nor of any real utility. The practice of these people accords with this theory; so that they neither baptize infants nor adults, nor do they receive the supper of the Lord. In opposition to this scheme we request that the following propositions may be carefully studied in the light of Holy Scripture.

1. The Christian sacraments were instituted by the Son of God, as the mediatorial Ruler and Judge of mankind, and that in the most express and unequivocal manner. “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth,” is His high and holy claim; and then, in the exercise of that sovereign “power,” He added, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 18-20.) With respect to the other sacrament He said, in a manner equally explicit, "Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi. 26-28.) "This do in remembrance of Me." (Luke xxii. 19.) Nothing can be more express. The command, in both cases, is as plain as, "Thou shalt not steal."

2. These institutions were never withdrawn by the Lord Jesus; the command to observe them was never repealed; nor is any intimation given in Holy Scripture that they were intended to continue only for a time. God gave to Abraham and to the Jewish church the sacrament of circumcision; and at length He as explicitly repealed it, by the ministry of His inspired apostles, St. Paul in particular. But what apostle ever in the name of God repealed the ordinance of baptism, or that of the Lord's supper? Other men have assumed and have said that these sacred institutions are no longer binding upon the disciples of Christ, and are no longer of any real benefit; but where have they learned this? and who gave them authority to promulgate any such doctrine? Where are their credentials, attesting that they have received a Divine commission? It is an inexcusable and criminal presumption in any man to take upon himself to repeal an ordinance or command of the Son of God. Such authority He has given to no man, and to no body of men; but, on the contrary, has said, "Ye are My friends, if ye do WHATSOEVER I com-

mand you." (John xv. 14.) The will of the great Lawgiver is not to be questioned, but obeyed; and it is His will, as He has declared it in His own word, that His disciples should, by eating of this bread, and drinking of this cup, show forth His death, not so long as they may deem it expedient or desirable, but "till He come." Men are neither to add anything to His commands, nor are they to take anything from them, much less are they to repeal them altogether. Warnings to this effect were given in the Old Testament, and they are repeated with no less solemnity in the New; for the Divine Author of the Bible knew the meddling disposition of men, who sometimes affect to be wiser than their Maker. (Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32; Rev. xxii. 18, 19.)

3. The reasons for the original institution of the sacraments apply as forcibly now as they did at first. Mankind are now as unapt to apprehend spiritual truths as they ever were, and therefore need these symbols of truth, seals and pledges of their heavenly Father's love, to assist their apprehensions, and to call forth in them that lively faith which is made the condition of salvation. When men say that they do not need these helps, they deceive themselves. They do need them; God Himself, who knows what is in men, having so determined.

But were it otherwise, and could we find a people who really do not need these spiritual helps, it would be their duty to submit without gainsaying to the command of the Lord Jesus. Our blessed Saviour did not personally need the baptism of John; but He meekly submitted to receive it, because it was God's ordinance. If it "became" Him and John "to fulfil all righteousness," it becomes all who bear the name of Christian to the end of the world. If the law of the sacraments



answered no other purpose than that of testing our obedience, it would still be worthy of God to give it, and it would be our unquestionable duty and interest to obey : for God has undeniably a right to try our fidelity to Him in any way that seems good in His sight ; and His will, in whatever manner it is made known, and to whatever subject it may relate, is a rule of action to us, and a rule from which no man is at liberty to deviate.

V. The last question that we will propose in reference to this subject is, Who are the persons that have a right to the Christian sacraments ? To this we answer :—

1. The children of believers are entitled to Christian baptism. Into this question we will not at present enter, as it will hereafter form a distinct subject of inquiry.

2. All truly penitent people, who are willing to forsake sin, and be saved by Jesus Christ, if they have not been baptized before, are entitled to Christian baptism. The opponents of infant baptism generally insist upon the new birth as a qualification for this ordinance ; but in this requirement they evidently depart from Scripture, and from apostolic practice. “Then Peter said unto them,” the penitent Jews on the day of Pentecost, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, AND ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts ii. 38.) Here we find baptism recommended as a means of obtaining forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The reason is, that these blessings are received by faith ; and baptism, as a seal of God’s covenant, is a help to faith. The same order we find observed in the baptism of Saul at Damascus, (Acts xxii. 16,) and, indeed, in nearly all the cases of conversion that are recorded in

the Acts of the Apostles. This is a subject which claims the special attention of missionaries. When persons among the heathen are convinced of the truth and Divine authority of Christianity, and express an earnest desire to share in its blessings, Christian missionaries, following the example of the apostles, should baptize them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to look for the great blessing of justification by faith in Christ, and to regard baptism as a token and pledge of God's fidelity and love, and therefore as a help to faith in Him.

3. Penitent sinners, who have been baptized, have a right to come to the table of the Lord. *There* are the emblems of redeeming mercy, the signs and pledges of God's love to men, even the most sinful and guilty. All such persons, who are seeking peace with God, should therefore be invited and encouraged to draw near to Him in the use of this holy sacrament, looking through the sign to the thing signified, and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls.

4. Baptized believers in Christ, being accredited members of the church, have a right to the supper of the Lord. Diligence in attending that ordinance should be urged upon them; its covenant character should from time to time be explained to them, in order to the strengthening of their faith in Christ; the administration of the ordinance should be made an occasion of reminding them of the nature and obligations of brotherly love, to the exercise of which they are specially called at the table of the Lord. The administration of this ordinance should also be made an occasion of renewing our covenant engagements with God. It is clear that all sin, both in principle and action, both in

the form of neglect and of positive transgression, should be put away by those who would acceptably approach to God in this most sacred ordinance. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup;" (1 Cor. xi. 28;) for Christ will tolerate no sin: nor have His ministers any right to administer the sacred elements to those who are known to live in sin, and refuse to put away the accursed thing. At the same time, the sanctified and obedient believer, in this most sacred ordinance, enjoys intimate fellowship with his Saviour, and communion with his brethren by whom he is surrounded.

## XV.—INFANT BAPTISM.

It may be justly doubted whether any questions in the entire compass of theology have been more eagerly disputed, than those which relate to the subjects and the mode of baptism. Many ages have passed away since these points were first brought into earnest discussion; and although several of the greatest and best men of whom the various Protestant churches can boast have endeavoured to ascertain the mind of the Spirit on the litigated questions, and to bring others to their opinions, the controversy appears to be as far from a termination as it ever was. Men of undoubted piety, and of unquestionable learning, still differ from each other as widely as they ever did; some of them contending that baptism should only be administered to adult persons, who give satisfactory proof of saving faith in Christ, and of the new birth; while others maintain, with equal tenacity, that the children of believing parents are entitled to that initiatory sacrament of the Christian covenant, and ought, in the use of it, to be dedicated to God. Those Christians who hold infant baptism, generally avow their conviction that the ordinance is properly and validly administered by sprinkling, or by affusion; but those who contend for adult baptism only, maintain that it is never rightly administered

except by immersion, or by plunging the candidate under water.

Leaving the question respecting the mode of baptism for future discussion, we will first attempt to establish the right of infants to this holy sacrament. On this subject it would be difficult to advance anything that is strictly new. Nor is this at all necessary; the principal arguments in defence of infant baptism having never, as we conceive, been fairly met and confuted. The following propositions contain a summary view of the principal evidence on this subject.

I. That the covenant which God made with Abraham, and which is recorded Gen. xvii. 1-14, is the covenant of grace, which was partially revealed and brought into operation immediately after the fall, and the benefits of which extend to all believers till the end of the world. The following is the inspired record of this momentous transaction:—

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect” (upright, or sincere). “And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations” (multitude of nations). “Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham” (father of a great multitude); “for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after



thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant."

We have said that the covenant here described is the covenant of grace; and the truth of this proposition, we think, must be obvious to every one who reflects on the subject with due attention. The blessings of that covenant are not, indeed, particularly enumerated, nor are the whole of its conditions distinctly specified; but both are implied in the comprehensive terms which are here employed. When the Almighty engages to be the God of any people, He promises to pardon them, to sanctify them, and to glorify them with Himself for ever. At the same time, the parties who enter into this cove-

nant, and take Him to be their God, engage to trust in Him, to love Him, and to serve Him according to His word and will. Nothing less than this do the terms which are here used properly imply.

It is also to be observed that the covenant which is here revealed is made with Abraham personally, and with his seed. The seed of Abraham comprehend, first, his natural descendants, through the line of Isaac and of Jacob; for these are expressly mentioned as the people who should possess the land of Canaan, in which Abraham himself dwelt only as a stranger. In that land He engaged to bestow upon them the richest blessings of His goodness. Among the seed of Abraham are also comprehended all the persons who should imitate the faith of Abraham, whether they be Jews or Gentiles by natural birth. This we learn from the testimony of St. Paul, who, addressing the Galatian churches, consisting of Gentile converts, says, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. iii. 7, 9, 29.)

It is also undeniable, that the same spiritual blessings and promises which belonged to the church of God under the Old-Testament dispensation, belong to it under the New. In proof of this fact, we may adduce the following texts of Holy Scripture: "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii. 39.) "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. i. 20.) In the eleventh chapter of the

Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul speaks of Abraham as the root and stock of the church. Of this root and stock the Hebrew people are "the natural branches;" and the believing Gentiles are grafts, inserted in the same stock, and partaking of its "root and fatness." In other words, they enjoy the same benefits and blessings. It is therefore undeniable, that Abraham's natural descendants, under the Old-Testament economy, and Christian believers of every tribe and nation, living under the evangelical economy, are one and the same visible church of God, in a continued succession, though under different administrations and ordinances.

II. Our second proposition is, that the covenant which was made by God with Abraham is still in force, and will be till the end of time.

This is indeed implied in what we have already said, but it deserves to be more fully considered: we have therefore chosen to make it the subject of a distinct proposition. It is plainly asserted by St. Paul, and made the basis of his argument against the Jewish zealots who attempted to bring the Gentile converts under the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies. "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." (Gal. iii. 17.) To the same purpose he says, in another place, "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to ALL the seed: not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." (Rom. iv. 14, 16.)

Here the perpetuity of God's covenant with Abraham is explicitly asserted. It extends to the believing Gentiles, as well as to the natural offspring of the holy patriarch. The Mosaic law was several years subsequent to the promulgation of this covenant, and was never intended to supersede it. And if, as the apostle teaches, while the law remained in force, the covenant of God with Abraham remained in force too, that covenant remains now that the law is abrogated ; for it was altogether independent of the law ; and is designed to continue as long as a believer, a spiritual son of Abraham, is found upon the earth. Nothing can annul that covenant, or make it of none effect. It is sure to all believers in all ages till the trumpet of the general judgment shall sound, and there shall be time no longer. In this respect the past is a guarantee for the future. Ever since God called Abraham, and settled His visible church in Abraham's family, He has never suffered His covenant with that patriarch to fail. It was "an everlasting covenant" that He made with Abraham, to be his God, and the God of his seed ; that Abraham might be the father of both the Jews and the Gentiles whom God would acknowledge as His church and people. (Gen. xvii. 7 ; Rom. iv. 11, 16.)

Such, then, is the nature and the perpetuity of God's covenant.

III. We advance, as a third proposition, that from the commencement of God's covenant with Abraham, till the subversion of the Jewish nation, infants, by the will and appointment of God, were admitted to a share in its benefits, and therefore received circumcision as its sacramental sign and seal.

On this point no room is left for dispute, the testi-

mony of Holy Scripture being direct and explicit. "Every man-child among you," said God, "shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations;" "and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." No language can be more express than that which is here used. God is the Speaker; and He commands that *every male child* of Abraham's posterity shall be circumcised; he shall be circumcised on the *eighth day* after his birth; this was to be an *unalterable ordinance*, extending through their several generations: and the circumcision of every male child was a *token of the covenant* between God and the people. He was acknowledged to be the God of every child that bore this token; and the child was professedly dedicated to Him. All this was matter of exalted privilege; for it was a benefit of the utmost importance for a fallen creature thus from early life to be placed in a covenant relation to God, and to have every blessing secured by express promise and stipulation from Him that cannot lie, and whose mercy endureth for ever. Every Hebrew parent, whose child bore in his person the token of God's covenant, was authorised to claim for that child the blessings of the covenant; and the child was bound to fulfil the conditions of the covenant by yielding himself up to the service of the God of Abraham.

IV. We advance, as a fourth proposition, that the children of Christian believers were never cut off from this privilege, whether they were Jews or Gentiles by natural birth; they are therefore members of the



church of God, and, as such, are entitled to the spiritual blessings and promises which God has given to His church.

When the Jews in general, "the natural branches," were cut off from the good olive-tree, because of their unbelief, their *little buds* were cut off with them; and when the believing Gentiles, as foreign branches, were grafted in, their *little buds* were grafted in with them. A gracious right of church-membership was given by God Himself to the infant children of His people, in the covenant with Abraham; He who conferred upon them the right has never taken it away; no creature either in earth or heaven has any authority to alter this covenant of God with men; and hence we conclude, on the surest ground, that the infant children of God's people still stand in a covenant relation to Him, in common with their parents, and therefore have a right to the initiatory sacrament of that covenant, let it be what it may.

V. We advance, as a fifth proposition, that baptism is now, by the authority of God, substituted for circumcision as the initiatory sign and seal of God's covenant of grace with men.

That circumcision is abolished, so as to be no more the sign and seal of God's covenant, was declared by the united assembly of apostles and elders at Jerusalem, acting under the immediate direction of the Holy Ghost. (Acts xv. 24, 28, 29.) Under the Old-Testament dispensation, whenever a heathen desired to share with the posterity of Abraham in all the blessings of God's covenant, he was required to be circumcised; (Exod. xii. 48, 49;) but the apostles, acting in the name of God and of Christ, declared this to be no longer necessary. When St. Paul

circumcised Timothy, it was merely for the purpose of obtaining for that young evangelist access to the Jews, as a preacher of Christ's Gospel ; for until he had received this rite, they would not even hear the truth from his lips. (Acts xvi. 1-3.) The circumcision of Timothy was not a matter of religious duty, but of mere expediency ; for the abrogation of circumcision, as a sacrament of God, St. Paul most strenuously maintained.

The substitution of baptism for circumcision is manifest from the initiatory character of the two rites ; and is also clearly implied in the following scriptures :—"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. iii. 27-29.) To understand the true import of this text, and its bearing upon our present argument, it is to be observed that the people of Galatia, whom the apostle here addresses, were converted heathens, who had received through faith in Christ the blessing of justification, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, "the Lord and Giver of life ;" but, under the influence of Judaizing teachers, they afterwards submitted to be circumcised, and attempted to conform to the whole Mosaic ritual, as necessary to salvation. For this departure from the simplicity of the Gospel the apostle earnestly reproves them, and expostulates with them, as having done that which was not only unnecessary, but under the altered circumstances of the church positively injurious. In the prosecution of his argument he asserts three things : 1. That, being "baptized into Christ," they had "put Him on," so as to have

acquired a gracious right to all the blessings of which He is the Author to sinful men. 2. That in this respect there was nothing peculiar in their case ; inasmuch as Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freemen, women and men, are now placed on a perfect equality by the Gospel. One way of salvation is open alike to all ; so that all put on Christ, who are baptized into Him. 3. That those who are Christ's, having put Him on, by a believing submission to the baptism which He has instituted, are "Abraham's seed," and "heirs according to the promise." In other words, they are entitled to all the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. Here, then, the apostle sets circumcision aside, and recognises baptism as the token of God's covenant with Abraham and his seed.

That baptism has taken the place of circumcision is further evident from Col. ii. 11, 12, where the apostle says, "In whom" (that is, in Christ) "ye also are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ : buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye also are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." That which circumcision symbolized,—the putting away of sin, and the sanctification of the man to God,—the Christian Colossians are declared to have received, by an inward and spiritual operation, which is here called "the circumcision of Christ ;" and this great blessing, by which they were prepared for heaven, is spoken of as being given, not in connexion with the literal circumcision, which was the original sign and seal of God's covenant with Abraham and his seed, but in connexion with baptism. Not the circumcised race, as

such, but baptized believers, are now the favoured recipients of the salvation of God, the fact of their descent from either Jewish or Gentile parents creating no ground of difference whatever. Here again, then, we have direct scriptural proof that baptism supplies the place of circumcision, and that by the will and appointment of God. Baptism and circumcision, indeed, signify the same thing,—the removal of sin; one by excision, the other by washing it away.

This is the great and leading argument in justification of infant baptism, and it is one that can never be refuted.\* God's covenant with Abraham is His covenant of grace and mercy with our fallen and guilty world, in the benefits of which all are invited to share. He there promises to be the God of Abraham, and of Abraham's seed, who are thus constituted God's church and people. Into this honourable relation all are admitted who follow the faith of Abraham, together with their infant offspring; God Himself directing, in the first instance, that the children of His people should be admitted, by the sacrament of circumcision, eight days after their birth. On the introduction of the evangelical dispensation, He took away the sacrament of circumcision, and substituted that of baptism in its place; but the gracious right of church-membership He never took away from the infant children of His people. And if He has not taken it away, they still possess it as His free and merciful grant. It follows, then, by necessary consequence, that the infant children of believers, having the gracious privilege of member-

\* In drawing up this argument, as many readers will doubtless perceive, a free use has been made of Mr. Wesley's "Thoughts upon Infant Baptism," published in the year 1751.

ship in the church of God, have a right to the initiatory sacrament of baptism, by which their right to church-membership is solemnly and formally recognised, as well as their right to the blessings of the covenant, for the enjoyment of which they should be individually trained.

Thus far, then, the argument in favour of infant baptism is direct and conclusive. Yet this is by no means the whole of the evidence that we have to adduce on the subject. A great amount of collateral evidence is also available; a part of which we will now specify.

1. One direct consequence of Christ's manifestation in the flesh was the enlargement of the spiritual privileges of mankind. The prophecies of the Old Testament speak of His appearance as matter of universal joy and gladness; for He was to "reveal the glory of the Lord," so that "all flesh should see it together." (Isai. xl. 5.) At the same time, it was declared that His own character would present the perfection of gentleness and love. "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." (Verse 11.)

That a vast increase of spiritual good was to be the effect of His coming was, indeed, an admitted fact from the beginning of the world. "Your father Abraham," said Christ, "rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad." (John viii. 56.) The announcement of the angels to the shepherds, on the occasion of His birth, was in full accordance with the language of prophecy. "And the angel of the Lord said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to ALL PEOPLE. For unto



you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." (Luke ii. 10, 11, 13, 14.)

With these facts before us, we may confidently appeal to the understanding and heart of every intelligent and candid man, and ask whether it is at all probable that the Lord Jesus, whose manifestation in the flesh is fraught with blessing to mankind, and who came to introduce a dispensation of religion richer in truth and spiritual privilege than the most favoured of God's people had ever known, would, on the occasion of His appearing, exclude from the church of God the millions of little children, the offspring of His own people, when they had been placed there by God's special grant, had remained there nearly two thousand years, and had done nothing to forfeit the high and sacred privilege. No man can believe this without shutting his eyes against the clearest evidence.

2. The argument is greatly strengthened by the fact, that our blessed Saviour expressed a most gracious and tender regard for little children. On this point there is no room left for doubt. "And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them : and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God." "And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." (Mark x. 13, 14, 16.) The probability is, that these children were brought to Jesus

by their mothers, who, having themselves received salvation from Him, were anxious that their offspring should be partakers of His mercy. They were very young, so as to be "brought" to Christ, and to be taken into "His arms:" and it is certain that they were brought to Him on a religious account, and not because of any bodily ailments that called for miraculous cures; for St. Matthew states that the request which was made to Him was, "that He would put His hands on them, and pray." (Matt. xix. 13.) On what ground the disciples interposed between these children and the Saviour, we are not informed. Perhaps they thought that as little children could not understand the doctrine of the great Teacher, they could receive no benefit from Him; forgetting for the time, it would seem, that their Lord was a Saviour, as well as a Teacher. Be this as it may, when Jesus saw their interference between these little children and Himself, He was not only "displeased," but "much displeased;" and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." "And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." Here, then, is every indication of the tenderest love. The Son of God rebukes those who stand in the way of these children; He invites the little ones to come to Him; He embraces them in His arms; He puts His hands upon them; He gives them His blessing; He declares that of such is the kingdom of God; or, as some others render the words, "the kingdom of God belongs to them." If this blessing were a mere ceremony, it was an expressive indication of the Lord's goodwill. But it was more than a ceremony. The word of the Son of God is a

word of power. Those whom He blesseth are blessed indeed.

This was not the only instance in which our Saviour declared His love to young children. When St. Peter said to Him, in answer to His inquiry, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee;" He gave that apostle a charge, not only to feed His sheep,—the adult members of His church,—but also the lambs of the flock, calling them His own. "Feed My lambs." (John xxi. 15.)

Again, then, we renew our appeal. From the time of Abraham to the days of our Lord, a period of about nineteen hundred years, the infant children of God's people were members of His church, and received the sacramental seal of God's covenant, by an express grant from Him; and can any man believe that the Lord Jesus, who thus presses them to His heart, declares the kingdom of God to "belong to them," and commits them to the care of an apostle, calling them at the same time His own, would disinherit them of their church-membership, placing them among the heathen, or "them that are without," till the end of the world?

3. Our argument is strengthened by the fact that whole families were admitted into the Christian church by baptism under the direct sanction of an inspired apostle. Of Lydia, the first Christian convert at Philippi, it is said, "She was baptized, and her household." (Acts xvi. 15.) Concerning the jailer in the same city it is also said, "He was baptized, he and all his, straightway." (Verse 33.) St. Paul has also stated, "I baptized the household of Stephanus." (1 Cor. i. 16.) When Abraham entered into covenant with God, he and the whole of the male members of his family received

the sacramental seal of that covenant ; and the apostles, it would appear from these examples, acted upon the same principle with regard to the people whom they admitted into the Christian church. When the head of a family received the truth, judging from the cases we have just adduced, his children were baptized with him. When Zaccheus received Christ, our Lord emphatically said, "This day is salvation come to this house, forso-much as he also is a son of Abraham ;" (Luke xix. 9 ;) for when the head of a family is converted, all the rest are placed under Christian instruction and influence, and therefore ought to be baptized. The New-Testament order is not that of waiting till all the people are penitent and saved, and then baptizing them. The apostles baptized men in order to repentance, and in order to pardon and peace.

4. The argument for infant baptism receives additional strength from the fact that St. Paul ascribes a relative holiness to the children of parents, one of whom is a Christian. In the Corinthian church there were persons whose wives and husbands still remained in a heathen state ; and they were in doubt whether they ought not to violate the marriage-tie, by separating themselves from these worshippers of idols. For their satisfaction the apostle says, "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband : else were your children unclean ; but now are they holy." (1 Cor. vii. 12-14.) These marriages, of course, were formed

before either party was converted to Christianity ; and the apostle teaches that they ought not to be dissolved, especially by the party that had received the truth. The Christian wife should rather aim at the conversion of her heathen husband, and the Christian husband at the conversion of the heathen wife ; according to the doctrine of St. Peter: “ Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands ; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives ; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.” (1 Peter iii. 1, 2.)

One great motive to the continued union of the parties in the case which St. Paul mentions is, that by this means their children are rendered relatively holy. If the father and mother separate, one of them being a heathen and the other a Christian, it may be expected, as a matter of course, that the heathen parent will take a part of the children, and so bring them up in idolatry, and entire alienation from Christ, and from God ; whereas “ now,” says the apostle, “ are they holy.” It cannot be here meant that the children of a Christian parent are by that relationship, and by living with that parent, necessarily sanctified, in the strict and full sense of that term ; but they enjoy a relative holiness, being separated from the contaminating rites of heathenism, and placed under evangelical instruction and training. This the apostle denominates holiness, because it is an actual deliverance from evil influences of the worst kind ; and its tendency is to produce that personal holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

This, then, is our argument : If the children of even one Christian parent are in this sense declared by an apostle to be “ holy,” “ can any forbid water, that they



should not be baptized?" If they are, as the offspring of even one Christian parent, relatively holy, the initiatory sacrament of the Gospel, which is the symbol of holiness, ought not to be withheld from them.

To all this amount of argument in favour of infant baptism, it should be added, that it has, with very few exceptions, been practised in the church from the apostolic times. Tertullian, who wrote about two hundred years after Christ, was the first opponent of infant baptism of whom we have any account; and he opposed it, not as an innovation in the church, and a departure from apostolic practice, but as being inconsistent with those superstitious notions concerning baptism of which he had become an advocate. He thought that it was very difficult, if not impossible, for any one to obtain the forgiveness of sins committed after baptism; and hence he recommended that the administration of it should be deferred till the temptations of youth were over. He would not in general permit unmarried people to be baptized, nor widows and widowers; thinking that they might probably be overcome by temptations to impurity. But every one must perceive that his doctrine finds no sanction whatever in the written word of God. Christ and His apostles never speak in this manner. They represent baptism as a means of forgiveness, and not as a hindrance to it. Tertullian, like many other men, possessed considerable strength of genius; but he was a man of weak judgment, and his knowledge of the true meaning of Holy Scripture was very defective. In the latter part of his life he adopted the errors of Montanus; alleging that Christ and His apostles gave only an imperfect revelation of the Gospel; and that Montanus was Divinely

appointed to complete the evangelical system : and yet all that this erring man even professed to advance consisted of a few stern and severe rules of ecclesiastical discipline ; for he forgot that the yoke of Christ is easy, and His burden light. That Tertullian does not oppose infant baptism as a novelty, or an innovation, is an important fact, and a clear intimation that he could not oppose it on any such ground. For proof of the uninterrupted practice of infant baptism from the apostolic times, we refer to Wall's "*History of Infant Baptism*," and to the "*Defence*" of it against the "*Reflections*" of Dr. Gale.\*

But, in opposition to all that has been advanced in favour of infant baptism, it is alleged that we have no express command to baptize infants ; and therefore they ought not to be baptized ; for to do things as matter of duty to God, which He has not commanded, is mere will-worship, and not an acceptable service. Our answer is, 1. That the objection is unsound in principle. It assumes that nothing is matter of duty to God unless it be expressly commanded by Him : whereas nothing can be more false. It is the duty of women to receive the Lord's supper ; yet female communion is not expressly and by name enjoined in the sacred oracles. God has not always revealed His will in the form of an express command. He has given us principles and examples to guide us ; and our blessed Lord has taught us, by His argument in proof of the resurrection of the dead, deduced from the words which God addressed to Moses out of the burning bush, to look for truth below the mere letter and surface of Holy Scripture. God has constituted the infant

\* See Note Z, at the end of the volume.

children of His people members of His church ; He has never taken from them this high privilege ; and therefore they are entitled to the sacrament by which their membership is formally recognised. To withhold it from them is to cast them out of the church of God, and treat them as heathens, while God in His word declares them to be relatively " holy." This is our first answer to the objection.

But, 2. We contend that we have a command to baptize infants. Our Saviour says, " Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) The marginal rendering of this text is decidedly preferred by the best and most competent critics. It is, " Go ye therefore, and make disciples, or Christians, of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." People of all nations are invited to accept the blessings of redemption ; all who are willing to accept of those blessings, and apply themselves to the study of Christ's doctrine, ministers are directed to baptize ; and when parents, one or both, thus submit themselves unto God, their children, infants as well as others, are acknowledged to be in covenant with Him, and are therefore to be baptized in His name. " All nations " are in this manner to be made disciples of Christ ; parents by their own voluntary act, and children by their parents' will ; the parents in all this acting under the sanction of God's express command. In this manner not only individuals, but households, are to be made disciples, or Christians, as they were in the apostolic times.

As to the objection that infants ought not to be baptized because they cannot understand the nature and design of baptism, nor the covenant of which it is the sign and seal, it applies with equal force against the circumcision of Abraham's male descendants on the eighth day after their birth; yet this was matter of express command by God. Whether an infant can understand the nature of that sacrament or not, the parents can understand it, and ought, in the use of it, to dedicate their children to God, claiming for them, in faith and prayer, the grace which that sacrament symbolizes, and which God by that sacrament pledges Himself to impart. That infants are capable of receiving the blessing of the Son of God is undeniable; for in the days of His flesh "He took them into His arms," and actually "blessed them;" and He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. His promise still is, "I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring." (Isai. xlv. 3.)

"He must have a hard face," says Baxter, "that will deny that it was once the duty of parents to offer their children to God, and enter them into covenant with Him; and when they have proved that this duty or power is recalled, (which I never yet saw done,) then we will forbear it; but till then it is not men's talk and confident words that must make a tender conscience yield, to omit so great and plain a duty, or give up so great a mercy as this is. I am sure that infants were then no more able to believe themselves, nor enter themselves in covenant with God then, than now; and I am sure the parents by God's appointment did it for them, offering and engaging them to God, and that God hereupon is called their God, and they His people; and

that usually the sign of the covenant was annexed. And I am sure the parents have as much natural interest in their children now as then; and I never yet saw where God had acquitted us of this duty, or withdrawn His mercy from us and our seed." \*

The great danger is, with respect to infant baptism, that it should be regarded simply as a becoming ceremony, or a matter merely of correct opinion: whereas it is a subject of great practical importance. Children, as well as their parents, are objects of God's covenant mercy. In their baptism this cheering fact is recognised; an interest in the blessings of the covenant is claimed for them; a pledge is given that they shall be instructed and disciplined with a direct reference to the duties and privileges of the Christian life. Ministers, having admitted them into the church, are bound to regard them as a part of their pastoral charge; and when they arrive at years of discretion, they should be solemnly urged to a formal and entire compliance with the conditions of God's covenant, that they may have their part in its blessings for ever. As the minds of Christian children open to apprehend and receive the truth, their attention should often be directed to their baptism, and to the responsibilities and encouragement which it involves; nor should they be allowed to rest satisfied with their position in the church till they have made an open and decided surrender of themselves to God through Christ, and have ratified their vows at the table of the Lord.

\* Baxter's "Confirmation and Restauration," pp. 234, 235. Edition of 1658.



## XVI.—THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

WE have examined the question concerning the subjects of baptism, and have ascertained what we conceive to be direct scriptural authority for the administration of that sacrament to the children of parents, one or both of whom believes in the Lord Jesus Christ ; and we now proceed to an examination of the other question which we formerly specified, and which has been also agitated with great warmth of feeling : we mean the MODE in which this sacrament should be administered. The opponents of infant baptism generally maintain that the ordinance is only scripturally and validly administered by immersion, the entire person of the subject being placed under water. By whomsoever the rite is administered, and whatever form of words may be used in the administration, these persons contend that there is no true baptism when the subject is only sprinkled with water, or when water is only poured upon him. Neither sprinkling nor affusion will they acknowledge as Christian baptism. They are therefore in the habit of re-baptizing, in their own way, all whom they can prevail upon to receive their tenets and join their community.

On this account they were formerly called “ Anabaptists ;” that is, “ Rebaptizers ;” because they repeated an

ordinance which ought never to be administered more than once in the same person. They complained of this, as a name of reproach, and it is now generally discontinued; so that the parties are now by most people called "Baptists," that is, "Baptizers," in accordance with their own wishes. Yet it may fairly admit of a doubt whether this is really just to other bodies of Christian people; for to apply this name to one class of Christians only involves the assumption, that they are the only people who administer the initiatory sacrament of the Christian dispensation. In this assumption we cannot acquiesce, any more than we can acquiesce in the assumption of the Socinians, that they are the only Unitarians; or in that of the Romanists, that they are the only Catholics. We claim to be Baptists, Unitarians, and Catholics; inasmuch as we hold the Christian doctrine of baptism; we hold the essential unity of God, against all polytheists and idolaters; we hold the doctrines of the Gospel, as they are laid down in the New Testament, and have been believed by the great body of Christian people in all ages and places since the apostolic times. We should be sorry to apply to any class of Christian people names of reproach, or names which would be just cause of offence; yet it is much to be regretted that names should by general consent be applied to some particular bodies of Christians which imply a direct censure upon all who dissent from their peculiar opinions. If we believe that there is scriptural authority for the baptism of infants, and that Christian baptism is rightly administered by sprinkling or affusion; if, in accordance with this belief, we baptize a child in the name of the Holy Trinity; and if, when that child arrives at man's estate, another person interferes, and

baptizes him by immersion ; we, of course, regard this as a case of rebaptizing, and, as such, profane and unwarrantable. In other words, we regard the man who thus administers the rite as an Anabaptist, or a Rebaptizer ; and he has no right to require us to call him a Baptist, because by so doing we by necessary implication stultify ourselves, by conceding the point that we do not baptize.

That baptism is rightly administered by sprinkling, or by affusion, we will now endeavour to show. We do not, indeed, deny that when baptism is administered by immersion it is valid. It may in some instances have been thus administered by the apostles, and by men who acted under apostolic direction ; but that this was their general practice, and that it is binding upon the church everywhere till the end of time, we positively and strenuously deny. After a careful examination of the subject, we are free to declare our full conviction that the evidence of Holy Scripture is decidedly in favour of baptism by sprinkling, or by affusion, and against immersion. Our reasons for this judgment we will state, with all simplicity and plainness, in a series of propositions, which we will endeavour to illustrate and confirm with as much brevity as will consist with clearness.

I. Our first proposition is, that baptism was a frequent practice among the Jews, under the Old Testament dispensation ; but it was performed by ablution and sprinkling, and not by immersion.

Few persons, comparatively, study the Holy Scriptures with the care and attention which their importance demands ; and hence many religious people imagine that baptism, as a religious rite, took its rise in the time of our Lord's forerunner, having, as such, never been

previously known. But this is obviously a mistake, as St. Paul has expressly declared. He says that the first tabernacle "was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." (Heb. ix. 9, 10.) The words which are here rendered "divers washings" are *διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς*, *various baptisms*; and these, it is stated on inspired authority, constituted a part of the religious service of the tabernacle, which was built in the wilderness, under the Divine direction, as the place where the worship of God was celebrated. It was afterwards superseded by the temple at Jerusalem. By a reference to the Mosaic writings, we readily ascertain what these "various baptisms" were.

1. There was a baptism of the priests, preparatory to their entrance upon the sacred duties of their office; such baptism being regarded as a part of their purification. "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt *wash them with water.*" (Exod. xxix. 4.) A similar command was given respecting the Levites: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them: *Sprinkle water of purifying upon them*, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them *wash their clothes*, and so *make themselves clean.*" (Num. viii. 5-7.)

Not only were the priests and the Levites thus purified by sprinkling and washing, when they entered upon their office and work; but whenever the priests went

into the sanctuary to discharge their sacred duties, they were required to undergo a similar ablution. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal : and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat : when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not ; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord : so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not : and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations." (Exod. xxx. 17-21.)

These ablutions, as a means of purification, were not confined to the priests and Levites : for,

2. The people in general, after they had contracted any ceremonial uncleanness, were required to submit to a similar process, in order to their admission into the house and service of God. "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord ; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel : because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean." (Num. xix. 13.) And again it is said, "And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel : and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave : and



the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day : and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even. But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord : the water of separation hath not been *sprinkled upon him* ; he is unclean." (Num. xix. 17-20.)

A process of the same kind was enjoined upon a leprous person when he obtained a cure. A mixture of blood and of running water was to be prepared ; and then the following direction was given to the priest :—" He shall *sprinkle upon him* that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean." " And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and *wash himself in water*, that he may be clean." " But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off : and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean." (Lev. xiv. 7-9.)

Upon the cases which are thus described, we will offer three observations.

1. These were cases of purification. The parties who are here mentioned were declared to be unclean, and therefore unfit for the service of God, in which they were called to engage ; they were also unfit to associate with the assemblies of God's people, who were professedly consecrated to Him. These methods of purification were therefore provided for their relief ; so that after they had submitted to these significant forms, they were allowed to draw near to God in the services

which He had prescribed, and to mingle freely with their brethren in their "holy convocations."

2. In these various forms of purification, sprinkling with pure water, and with a mixture of pure water and blood, is expressly enjoined; but immersion is neither enjoined, nor even mentioned. The parties were to be sprinkled, and they were to bathe their flesh in water, and to wash their feet and their hands. The Hebrew word, which is here rendered "bathe," simply signifies to wash; and is generally so rendered throughout the Old Testament. It is applied, (Gen. xliii. 31,) to the washing of the face, which is not done by immersion, but by applying water to it with the hands, or with a towel. Joseph washed his face, and went out and refrained himself. In some cases, it will be observed, the priests and people were to wash themselves; and at other times they were to submit to be washed and sprinkled by other persons; but in no instance is immersion enjoined upon them.

3. These forms of purification, as we have already seen, the apostle calls "various baptisms." For that he is speaking of these rites there can be no doubt. The baptisms that he mentions were baptisms that related to "the first tabernacle;" and such were the whole of these. Some of them were intended to prepare the priests and Levites to officiate there; and others were intended to prepare the people to enter into "the tabernacle of the congregation," from which they had been excluded on account of their impurity. It is therefore undeniable that these are the "baptisms" to which St. Paul directly refers; and among these "baptisms" sprinkling is repeatedly and expressly mentioned, and is included among the various forms of

Jewish baptism. To say, therefore, that baptism is the immersion of the whole body under water, and nothing else, is to contradict the very language of the Holy Ghost, who terms sprinkling baptism, as well as other forms of purification by water.

It may be proper in this place to advert to the subject of proselyte baptism among the Jews, concerning which there has been some difference of opinion among theological writers. The church of God among the Jews was open to the heathen, who were even invited to renounce their abominable idolatries, to adopt the worship of the true God, and to share with His people in all the blessings of His covenant. The mode of their admission was prescribed by God Himself. "When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you." (Exod. xii. 48, 49.) It is here provided that when a heathen became a proselyte to the Jews' religion, all the males belonging to his family, whether young or old, should be circumcised with him; so that the entire family were admitted into the church of God: and there is the strongest reason for believing that they were all baptized with water at the same time. For if a Jew who had contracted any uncleanness, even by accident, must be purified by a baptism before he could enter again into "the tabernacle of the congregation," much more does it appear necessary that a heathen, whose whole life had been one continued course of pollution from his youth,

should undergo the same purification on his admission into the assembly of God's people, and his participation in the ordinances of Divine worship. In the Old Testament, indeed, we find no mention of these proselyte baptisms; but the Jewish writers in general mention them very explicitly, as Dr. Lightfoot has largely shown in his "*Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations.*" On Matthew iii. 6, he says, after giving various quotations from the Rabbinical writers, "You see baptism inseparably joined to the circumcision of proselytes. There was, indeed, some little distance of time; 'for they were not baptized till the pain of circumcision was healed, because water might be injurious to the wound.' But certainly baptism ever followed. We acknowledge, indeed, that circumcision was plainly of Divine institution; but by whom baptism, that was inseparable from it, was instituted, is doubtful. And yet it is worthy of observation, our Saviour rejected circumcision, and retained the appendix to it. And when all the Gentiles were now to be introduced into the true religion, He preferred this proselytical introductory (pardon the expression) unto the sacrament of entrance into the Gospel." It should, however, be observed, that if the law did not expressly enjoin the administration of baptism to proselytes, it did enjoin the administration of it to Jews who had contracted any uncleanness; so that in making baptism the sacrament of admission into the Christian church, our Lord selected a rite of Divine origin and appointment, and one with which the people of God had been long familiar.

From proselyte baptism, as it has been just described, two important facts are deducible: First, baptism by sprinkling and ablution. For if there was to be "one law for the

stranger, and for him that was home-born," then the heathen proselyte was to be admitted into the congregation of God's people by the same kind of baptism as that which was administered to the Jew who had been excluded on account of his uncleanness; and that was, as we have seen, by having the water of separation sprinkled upon him. Secondly, from the practice of admitting the entire family of a proselyte into the Jewish church, infant baptism follows by necessary consequence. All the males belonging to the family of the proselyte were circumcised,—the young children as well as adult persons; and if all who were circumcised were also baptized, as the Jewish writers declare, then infants were baptized as well as youths and men. Infant baptism, therefore, was well known among the Jews, in the time of Christ, and of His apostles; for strenuous attempts were then put forth by Jewish zealots to make proselytes among the heathen. "Ye compass sea and land," said our Saviour, "to make one proselyte." (Matt. xxiii. 15.) Hence it is that the baptism of whole families by the apostles, when the heads of those families embraced the Gospel, was no novelty, but took place as a matter of course. These family baptisms excited no particular attention, because the same practice was uniformly followed when the head of a heathen family embraced the Jews' religion.

That the Jewish people in the days of our Lord attached the idea of purification to the term "baptism," and that they performed the rite by sprinkling and ablution, is manifest from the fact that they applied the term to their manner of purifying various domestic utensils. "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things



there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing" (*βαπτισµοὺς*) "of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables." (Mark vii. 3, 4.) The purification of all these articles by water is here called "baptisms." It is absurd to suppose that they were all immersed in water; because among them we find *κλινῶν*, which our translators have called "tables," and, in the margin, "beds." The word properly signifies "couches," such as the people were accustomed to recline and rest upon. No one can suppose that these were dipped in water. They were rather sprinkled with water, as were various utensils that were used in the tabernacle; and as the purification of "the cups, and pots, and brassen vessels," was also ceremonial, the probability is that they were sprinkled in the same manner; and if not, that they were washed by rubbing with the hand.

"The word *βαπτισµοὺς*," says the learned Light-foot, "applied to all these, properly and strictly, is not to be taken of dipping or plunging, but in respect of some things of washing only, and in respect of others of sprinkling only." \*

We are led to the same conclusion respecting the scriptural meaning of the word "baptism," by the accounts which the evangelists have given of the manner in which the Jews were accustomed, in the days of our Lord, to purify their persons, in order to their preservation from ceremonial pollution. "And a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him: and He went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that He had not first washed" (*ἐβαπτίσθη*, "baptized") "before dinner." (Luke xi. 37, 38.) With this passage we may advantageously compare

\* "Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations," Mark vii. 4.

Mark vii. 3, 4, to which we have just adverted. "The Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not." "And when they come from the market, except they wash," (*βαπτίσωνται*, "baptize,") "they eat not." The question, then, is, What was the kind of washing, or of baptism, that the Jews practised, before they took their meals? The answer is, that it was common, so as to be practised repeatedly every day; for the Pharisees "marvelled" that our Lord had omitted it; the custom, it seems, being universal. No one can suppose that every Jewish family had a bath, and that before every meal all the members of the family, and all the strangers that came to visit them, stripped off their clothing, and plunged their bodies under water, and that at all seasons of the year. We ask, then, again, What was the washing which the Jews so generally practised before they took their meals? The evangelists have supplied the answer. It consisted particularly in washing their hands. "The Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not." The marginal rendering of the text is, "Except they wash diligently;" and the translators add, "In the original, 'with the fist: ' Theophylact, 'up to the elbow.' " With this view the context agrees: "When they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault." (Mark vii. 2.) The same statement is made by St. Matthew: "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." (Matt. xv. 1, 2.)

Here, then, we see what was the nature of that daily washing which the Jews practised before they took

their food. It consisted not in the immersion of the whole body, but in washing the hands with great care. For the regular performance of this ceremony, preparation, it appears, was made in every family; for in the house at Cana of Galilee, where Jesus went to attend a marriage festival, it is said, "There were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece." (John ii. 6.) The water which was contained in these vessels was intended for the purifying of the family and of the guests; and it was provided "after the manner of the Jews;" not that the people might immerse themselves in it, but receive what was sufficient for the washing of their hands. Now to this ceremonial purification, which consisted in a partial washing only, the name of "baptism" is applied: a clear and demonstrative proof that the term bears a wide and general signification; and is not to be restricted to immersion, as some persons have contended.

And let it not be said, that when the Jews washed their hands before their meals, they immersed their hands in water, and that therefore the term "baptism" is applied to these ablutions; for the Oriental mode of washing the hands, and especially among persons of distinction, was very different, as it is manifest from 2 Kings iii. 11: "And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah," acting, in this respect, as Elijah's servant. The same practice is still continued in the East. In the "Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews, from the Church of Scotland, in the Year 1839," the travellers state that when they were at Damietta, in Egypt, "after

the repast, the servant carried round a brazen bason, and out of a jar poured water on the hands of every guest. We remembered Elisha pouring water on the hands of Elijah." \* And again, when they were at Sidon, they say, "Sometimes at night Antonio and Botros poured water on our hands, to wash away the dust, reminding us of 2 Kings iii. 11." †

We have now before us proof as direct and conclusive as any subject of this kind can admit of, that the term "baptism" is used in Holy Scripture to denote sprinkling and ablution in general, and is not at all confined to immersion. It is applied to the ceremonial purifications which were connected with the Jewish tabernacle, and which had respect both to the priests and the people; it is also applied to those purifications which the Jews practised in the time of our Lord with regard to their persons and their household furniture; and in none of these cases does it appear that there was any immersion.

II. We advance, as a second general proposition, that, according to the Scripture account, it is far more probable that John baptized by sprinkling, or by pouring water upon the people, than by immersion.

1. In proof of this proposition we adduce, as the foundation of our first argument, the fact that, according to the Gospel narrative, John's baptism gave no offence, as containing anything that was new and strange. John was of the priestly order. His father, Zacharias, was in the priesthood, and his mother, Elisabeth, "was of the daughters of Aaron;" (Luke i. 5;) but instead of receiving baptism as a priest, and entering upon the services of the temple, when he had arrived at the age of thirty years, he opened his commission as the fore-

\* Page 91.

† Page 340.

runner of the Lord Jesus in the wilderness of Judæa : a district of country which was uncultivated, but which supplied him with "locusts and wild honey;" and upon these he subsisted as his diet. His clothing was also peculiar; for "the same John had his raiment of camels' hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins." "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt. iii. 4-6.) The baptism of John, which is thus described, was administered in order to repentance, or with a direct reference to repentance. (Matt. iii. 11.) It was a symbol of that moral and spiritual purification, or of that general putting away of sin, which was then required of the people, that they might enjoy the benefits of the kingdom of God, which the Messiah was about to introduce. "The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." (Luke vii. 30.) With these exceptions, the people in general appear to have acquiesced in the baptism of John; and even the whole of the Pharisees did not stand aloof from him; for it is said that "he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism." (Matt. iii. 7.) Indeed, so deep and general was the impression upon the public mind that John was a prophet, and his baptism of Divine appointment, that the heads of the nation, the chief priests, scribes, and elders, durst not, even in the temple, say anything to the contrary, lest the multitude should stone them. (Luke xx. 1-6.)

Now it is not at all likely, considering all the circumstances of the case, that there would have been this ready and general acquiescence in the baptism of John,



had the mode of its administration been materially different from those baptisms to which the people had been accustomed in every age of their national existence. Those baptisms, as we have seen, consisted in sprinkling and washing, as a means of ceremonial purification. The people were now told by John, that the Messiah was just ready to appear; that the kingdom of God, which Daniel had predicted, was at hand; and that all classes of people were therefore called upon to renounce the sins to which they were addicted, to repent before God on account of them, and submit to baptism as a symbol of the change of character which was required of the whole nation. It is a remarkable fact, that "John did no miracle," (John x. 41,) notwithstanding the tone of authority that he assumed, and the boldness with which he asserted his claims. Had the baptism which he administered, therefore, been different from that to which the nation had long been accustomed, it is not at all probable that the people in general would at once have submitted to receive it. Many would have inquired into the validity of his claims, had he proposed a new religious rite, and would have demanded miraculous proofs of a Divine commission. But as there was then a general expectation of the Messiah; as John proposed no new article of doctrine, but enforced repentance, which all felt to be a duty, and especially if the Messiah were immediately to appear; and as the symbolical rite which John administered had been practised in their nation for more than fourteen hundred years, and was therefore well understood, there appears to have been no declared and open opposition to it. Some of the Pharisees and scribes declined to receive it, but they do not appear to have opposed it publicly; and

we cannot conceive that there would have been this quiet and prompt submission to John's baptism,—a submission which was all but unanimous and national,—had it been administered in the novel and inconvenient form of immersion.

2. The number of the people who received John's baptism was such, that it appears impossible he should have immersed them all. The terms which the evangelists have used show that the great mass of the Jewish people came to the baptism of John, and were actually baptized by him. "Then went to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him." (Matt. iii. 5, 6.) St. Mark expresses himself to the same effect: "And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him." (Mark i. 5.) St. Luke, therefore, might well describe them as a "multitude that came forth to be baptized of him." (Luke iii. 7.) We cannot consider these terms as denoting less than a majority of the adult population of the Jewish race, then resident in the land of their fathers.

With respect to the full time of John's ministry, we have no certain *data* to enable us to form a perfectly accurate calculation; but it would appear, all things considered, that his ministry did not continue much longer than one year: and the probability is that the greater part of his baptisms were performed during the first half of this period. John was of the priestly race; and the Jewish priests did not enter upon the duties of their office till they were thirty years of age. At this age our blessed Lord entered upon His public work; and John was then fully engaged in the fulfilment of his

ministry. He was six months older than our Lord ; and we naturally conclude that for six months he had been employed in preaching and baptizing when Jesus came to him to be baptized, and then began to preach. At the time of His baptism, "Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age." (Luke iii. 23.) At that time John had attained to the full height of his popularity ; for when Jesus, immediately after His baptism and temptation, began to preach, He also began to baptize ; not personally, but by His disciples. From that time John's influence declined ; for it soon became notorious that "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John ; though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples." (John iv. 1, 2.) When it was told John that Jesus "baptized, and all men came to Him," he expressed a perfect acquiescence in this state of things ; saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John iii. 26, 30.) John "was a burning and a shining light ;" and many were "willing to rejoice in his light ;" but it was only "for a season." (John v. 35.) No sooner did our blessed Saviour begin to preach and baptize, than John's power began to wane ; his work was done : he had prepared the way of the Lord ; and when the Lord entered upon His work, His miracles at once demonstrated His immense superiority to His forerunner. In a little while John was cast into prison, where he remained a considerable time, and was then put to death ; and all this long before our Lord had completed the three years of His ministry. John's public career, therefore, was very short ; so that his numerous baptisms occupied only a very brief period.

We must also remember that John was not only a

baptizer, but also a preacher, and a very effective one. He was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness;" (John i. 23;) and as such he "came preaching in the wilderness of Judæa." (Matt. iii. 1.) Much of his time, of course, was occupied in addressing the successive companies of people as they arrived; and his discourses were adapted to the character of those who came before him, whether they were hypocritical Pharisees, sceptical Sadducees, avaricious publicans, or lawless soldiers; and not a few of the people who came to him asked his advice as to the manner in which they should manifest the sincerity of their repentance; fruits meet for it being demanded in every case.

With these facts before us, we may well inquire whether it is at all probable, nay, whether it is indeed possible, that one man, whose calling it was to preach, as well as to baptize, could, in so short a time, separately and deliberately, immerse such vast multitudes of people as those whom the evangelists declare came to him to be at once instructed and baptized.

The following clear and forcible statement is made by a modern writer, who has evidently studied the whole controversy with close attention, and has discussed it with learning and moderation:—"The multitudes baptized by John render it physically impossible that they should have been immersed by him, and consequently prove that to baptize cannot mean to dip, or immerse. The statement, that the people of Jerusalem, and all the people of Judæa, and of the vicinity of the Jordan, were baptized by John, need not be understood as meaning every individual; but it must be interpreted in reference to the larger portion of the population. A few of the higher classes, and many of the ministers of

religion, rejected his mission ; but it is repeatedly intimated that all the people regarded him as a prophet. It should be remarked, that it is expressly stated, that the people were all baptized by him ; it is not said, by his disciples ; and it certainly would appear, from the account given by the evangelists, that much of his time was occupied in imparting religious instruction. They must have strange notions of his office,—who was to prepare the way of the Lord, and turn many to their God,—who imagine that the performance of an external rite, rather than the communication of truth, occupied the time, and the bodily and mental energy, of this illustrious man. Now it may be safely asserted, that it is impossible for one man to immerse in the waters of a river so many as two hundred persons in one day, or one thousand in a week, or thirty thousand in a year. It is not likely that the ministry of John preceded that of Christ by more than a few months ; so that if, instead of being engaged in teaching the people, he had stood in the water for nine or ten hours of every day, he could not have immersed during those months more than a few thousand persons. Josephus estimates the number of persons present in Jerusalem, at the passover, at two millions seven hundred thousand. Many of these, no doubt, came from distant regions ; but if we take only one third, nine hundred thousand, as being inhabitants of Judæa, Jerusalem, and the vicinity of Jordan ; and if we suppose that one third of these might be designated the whole population, we shall have the number of three hundred thousand who were baptized by John. Such a work could not have been accomplished in less than ten or twelve years, supposing him to have been engaged every day in this



laborious and unhealthy occupation. And can it be imagined that this was the work performed by one man, the work narrated by the evangelists with such brief simplicity, the work assigned to the most honoured of the messengers of God under the old dispensation ; this the work that was to prepare the people for the spiritual kingdom of our Lord ? ” \*

3. The difficulties and inconveniences which would have unavoidably attended the immersion of so many people as came to the baptism of John render it absolutely incredible that they were baptized in this manner. The crowds were immense ; and it is, we believe, universally acknowledged that they consisted of both men and women. If they were baptized naked, John's baptism was one of the greatest outrages upon public decency the world has ever seen, and was perfectly alien from the pure and spiritual religion which the Lord Jesus came to introduce. Few persons, it is therefore presumed, will contend that they were thus baptized. Let us, then, take the other alternative, and suppose that they were immersed in water with their clothes on. Then, as soon as they came out of the water, a change of raiment was necessary ; for they could not remain in their clothes, when saturated with water, but at the hazard of health and life. The question then arises, Where could all these people retire, men and women, for the purpose of that change of raiment which was necessary ? They were all in the wilderness, an open and uncultivated country. To change their raiment publicly would have been as great an indecency as to be baptized naked. Will it be said, then, that the people were provided with tents or booths into which they

\* Godwin's "Christian Baptism," pp. 82, 83.

retired ? Neither is this credible ; for who should provide such extensive accommodation ? John, who appears to have been destitute of worldly property, and therefore lived upon locusts and wild honey, could not be expected to do this ; and as many of the people came from far, it is not likely that they brought such things with them ; nor is the slightest intimation given by the evangelists of anything of the kind. From the manner in which the entire subject is related by the inspired historians, we should conclude that the whole service was conducted with the utmost simplicity, and without any of the pomp and stir of an extensive preparatory arrangement.

If it be said, there was no greater difficulty in John's baptizing the people by immersion, than there is in the administration of the ordinance by immersion in our own country, where services of this kind often occur ; the answer is obvious. The cases are not alike. In England, baptism by immersion usually takes place in a chapel, where a cistern is provided for the purpose ; and the parties, on coming out of the water, immediately retire into a vestry, where a change of raiment is provided ; so that here there is no difficulty. Or if, in our own country, baptism by immersion is administered in the open air, a river is chosen as near to the house of the parties who are to be baptized as possible, that they may immediately return home, and change their apparel. With us baptisms by immersion are comparatively rare ; and only a few individuals are thus baptized at the same time. Between these solitary cases and the baptism of John the difference is therefore wide and manifest. He baptized the people by thousands, and by tens of thousands, and that in the wilderness, where

most of them were far from their homes ; and no intimation is given that any such accommodation was provided for them as decency required, supposing them to have been plunged into the water.

We are told that baptism is now administered by immersion both in the chapel and in the open air without any violation of public decency ; but the men who allege this in proof that John might immerse the people in the same manner, forget that there is a mighty difference between the case of a man who, in the course of his life, baptizes by immersion twenty or thirty persons, and that of John, who baptized a nation in a few months. What would a Baptist minister do, in his chapel or by the side of a river, if a thousand people, male and female, were to press upon him at the same hour, as candidates for the sacrament which is the subject of our present inquiry ? Would he, upon his principles, baptize them with as much facility as that with which John baptized the Jewish race ? He is a bold man who will answer this question in the affirmative. Mr. Wesley's note upon Matthew iii. 5, 6, which bears upon this subject, is just and appropriate. He says, "Such prodigious numbers could hardly be baptized by immersing their whole bodies under water : nor can we think they were provided with change of raiment for it, which was scarce practicable for such vast multitudes. And yet they could not be immersed naked with modesty, nor in their wearing-apparel with safety. It seems, therefore, that they stood in ranks on the edge of the river ; and that John, passing along before them, cast water on their heads or faces ; by which means he might baptize many thousands in a day."

4. The texts of Holy Scripture which are adduced to prove that John administered baptism by immersion contain no such proof. It is, for instance, alleged that he baptized the people "IN Jordan," and therefore baptized them by immersion. (Matt. iii. 6.) The answer is, that the words of the evangelist, ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ, might with equal propriety be rendered "AT the Jordan." The word ἐν is rendered *at* more than a hundred times in the New Testament; and no man can prove that it bears a different meaning in this text. But if we take the text as it stands in the Authorised Version, the doctrine of immersion does not necessarily follow; for the people might go into the bed of the Jordan without going into the water at all. The stream of the Jordan varied, sometimes running very low, and at other times swelling, and even overflowing its banks. "How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" (Jer. xii. 5.) "Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest." (Joshua iii. 15.) "These are they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflown all his banks." (1 Chron. xii. 15.) Or the people may have gone into the river, so as actually to stand in the water, for the purpose of being sprinkled by John, without any reference to immersion whatever. This, indeed, is highly probable; for as the people in general wore sandals upon their otherwise naked feet, they could go a certain depth into the water without any inconvenience. In this case they might not only be baptized "AT the Jordan," but also "IN the Jordan," without immersion.

Great stress has sometimes been laid upon the expression Matt. iii. 16, as if it contained direct and positive proof that our blessed Lord was baptized by

immersion : “ And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water :” but the words, ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος, signify no more than “ FROM the water ;” so that previous immersion is neither asserted nor necessarily implied. He may have stood on the margin of the water ; or He may have stood partially in the water, and not have been placed entirely under it. Nothing more than this can be justly inferred from the sacred text. The rest is all assumption.

But it is said, with an air of triumph, if these texts do not prove the practice of baptism by immersion, the following certainly does : “ And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salin, because there was much water there.” (John iii. 23.) Why, it has been said, did John choose a place where there was “ much water,” but that he might immerse the people ? A small quantity would have been sufficient for the purpose of sprinkling. The answer here is, that the words of St. John, ὕδατα πολλὰ, rather signify *many waters*, or *streams of water*, than a large mass of water collected in one place ; and this view of the meaning of the passage is confirmed by the fact, that Ænon, the name of the place, means *the wells* : so that if there were “ many waters there,” it does not follow that they were sufficiently deep for the purpose of immersion. Considering the immense crowds of people who came to John, “ much water” was necessary, not only for baptism, but for other purposes. Many of them came from remote places, doubtless bringing their provisions with them ; and both they and their cattle would need “ much water ” to drink in that warm climate, as well as for personal cleanliness. To congregate large masses of people together, in a country like that, without an abundant supply of water, would



have been attended by consequences of a most disastrous kind. No proof of immersion, therefore, is contained in the text to which we have just adverted. John might wisely choose *Ænon* as the place of his baptism, without intending to immerse any individual in the streams which appear to have there flowed from their several fountains.

On all these grounds we maintain that there is no proof in the New Testament that John, in any instance whatever, administered baptism by immersion; and there is strong presumptive evidence that, on the contrary, he did administer it by sprinkling, as the Jewish priests had long been in the habit of doing, and as the people had long been accustomed to witness it, or by pouring water upon the head of each candidate: so that from the baptism of John no just conclusion can be drawn in favour of immersion; the evidence being decidedly in favour of one of the other modes, and especially that of sprinkling.

## XVII.—THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

WE have examined the Scripture account of baptism as it was administered in the Jewish Church, in accordance with the law of Moses, and as it was administered by John, as the forerunner of our blessed Lord ; and we confess that to us the evidence appears to be decidedly in favour of sprinkling, or of affusion, and not of immersion. We next proceed to an examination of the Scripture account of Christian baptism ; and if we are not greatly mistaken, we shall be led to the same conclusion respecting the mode of its administration as in the two former cases. We confess it is possible that the apostles may, in some instances, have baptized the people by immersion : but of this we conceive there is no proof whatever in the Holy Scriptures. We therefore advance, as a third proposition,

III. That the general evidence of the New Testament is in favour of the administration of Christian baptism by sprinkling, or by affusion, and not by immersion.

In making a distinction between the baptism of John and Christian baptism, we have not only the authority of eminent theological writers, but, as we conceive, the authority of Holy Scripture. At Ephesus St. Paul met with twelve men who had received the

baptism of John. "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts xix. 4, 5.) Hence it is manifest, that John's baptism had respect to Christ as not yet openly revealed, but as "Him that should come;" and Christian baptism has respect to Him as having been already manifested, as having died, and been raised again. The people, therefore, who had received the baptism of John were rebaptized after the crucifixion of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

With this fact agrees the apostolical commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii. 19.) For as the great mass of the Jewish people had been baptized by John, had there been no difference between his baptism, and that which Christ instituted after His resurrection, He would doubtless, in the commission which He gave to the apostles, have made an exception of the "nation" of the Jews, and not have placed them, in respect of this ordinance, upon a level with the heathen. It is undeniable, therefore, that a distinction is to be made between the baptism which John administered, and that which the apostles afterwards administered under the direction of Christ, when the Gospel revelation was completed.

While we thus maintain that the Holy Scriptures make a difference between the baptism of John and Christian baptism, we think that this difference relates not to the mode of administration, but to the objects to which the rite was specially directed; the baptism of

John having respect to Christ as not yet revealed, but as just ready to appear, and pledging the people to repentance and a moral reformation, that they might be prepared to receive Him; and Christian baptism relating to Him as not merely incarnated, but as having actually died as a sacrifice for sin, and risen again to intercede for guilty men, and to pardon and save them. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" (Rom. vi. 3.) Yet there is not the slightest evidence in the New Testament, that Christian baptism, as to the mode of its administration, differed from that of John, which, as we have already seen, we have every reason to believe was administered, not by immersion, but by sprinkling, or by affusion.

The first mention that is made of the baptism which was practised under Christ's immediate direction is in John iii. 25, 26, and John iv. 1, 2. In the second of these passages it is stated, that the Pharisees were informed that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John; though He did not baptize in person, but by His disciples. At this time Jesus had entered upon His public ministry; a voice from heaven had declared Him to be the Son of God; and John had borne witness to the same fact. No intimation is here given as to the mode in which baptism was administered under our Lord's direction; so that, as yet, we find no evidence in favour of immersion.

Nor is any such evidence contained in the apostolical commission to which we have just referred. (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15, 16.) A simple direction is given to the apostles to administer baptism, with an intimation that all who would be saved by Jesus Christ

must submit to receive it: but the mode of its administration is supposed to be well understood; and, of course, understood by the practice of John, and of the Jewish church.

When the apostles began to preach, after the ascension of our Lord, and they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, we find them administering baptism; and although no explicit information is given respecting the mode, the circumstantial evidence we conceive to be all in favour of sprinkling, or of affusion. On the day of Pentecost, for example, the inspired narrative clearly implies that about three thousand persons were baptized in Jerusalem. At the third hour of the day, that is, about nine o'clock in the morning, St. Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, began to preach to the assembled multitudes. An outline only of his sermon is recorded; for it is said, "With many other words did he testify and exhort." (Acts ii. 40.) It is also stated, "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." It is undeniable that a considerable part of this day was spent in giving and receiving instruction. The apostle preached, and the people listened to him. They became alarmed, and inquired what they must do, their consciences being burdened with the guilt of shedding the blood of the Son of God. The apostle answered their anxious inquiries; and about three thousand of them submitted to be baptized, and to be saved through Jesus Christ. Now, we would appeal to any dispassionate thinker, whose mind is unwarped by prejudice, whether, at the close of the day, when so much time had been occupied in preaching, in making inquiries respecting the way



of salvation, and in receiving answers to these inquiries, it is at all likely, that three thousand persons, male and female, could have provided themselves with a change of raiment, and have been separately immersed, even if all the apostles had engaged in the service. Besides, where could all these people be immersed? We have no account of any river in Jerusalem, or its immediate neighbourhood; and it is not likely that the apostles of Jesus, whom the people had crucified with bitter hatred, would be allowed to pollute the water that might be collected in the public tanks or reservoirs, intended for the use of families in the city, by plunging three thousand persons into it, either naked, or with their clothes upon them.

After the Pentecost we frequently read of persons being baptized when they heard and received the Gospel; but in most cases the rite is simply mentioned, without any circumstances from which a judgment might be formed respecting the mode of its administration. The Samaritans, for instance, were in great numbers baptized by Philip, both men and women; but in what manner we are not informed. There are, however, a few cases of baptism described in the Acts of the Apostles with such a degree of minuteness as to contain suggestions respecting the mode; and these cases we will carefully examine.

The first that we will mention is that of the Ethiopian, whom Philip baptized in the desert country between Jerusalem and Gaza. This case has been often appealed to, with an air of triumph, as proving that immersion was then the mode of baptism; for it is said, "They went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." After the rite had been

administered, they are also spoken of as having "come up out of the water." (Acts viii. 38, 39.) It is said, Why should they have gone into the water, but for the purpose of immersion? Perhaps an exact criticism might show that the Greek text really means no more than this,—that they both went down from the chariot "to the water;" and that they "came up" from "the water." But these are points for which we will not contend; for, taking the passage as it is given in the Authorised Version, it does not prove that this noble stranger was baptized by immersion. It is not said either that the water was sufficiently deep for immersion, or that immersion actually took place. As in the cases of John's baptism, "AT the river Jordan," or "IN the river Jordan," the sable convert may have stood within the water's edge, and have been there baptized either by sprinkling or affusion. Immersion is not in the record; but is a mere assumption, as Mr. Wesley has justly observed in his note upon the text. "It does not follow that he was baptized by immersion. The text neither affirms nor intimates anything concerning it."

The next case that we will select is that of Saul, which is described in Acts ix. 17–19. He had been blind for three days, and during this time had abstained from food altogether; so that he was in a state of great bodily weakness, as well as of mental sorrow. "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was

baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened." Here we find Saul in the house, apparently stretched upon a couch, or more probably upon the ground, in a state of physical exhaustion and of mental anguish. Ananias, having explained to him the purpose of God in thus arresting him in his persecuting career, addressed him in the language of expostulation: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii. 16.) In compliance with this admonition, Saul "arose, and was baptized; and when he had received meat, he was strengthened." The most natural interpretation of the sacred narrative is, that without leaving the house where Ananias found him, and without even leaving the room, he was baptized. Having received the salvation of God in the use of this sacrament, he was comforted in his mind, and then received food, so as to recover his bodily strength. Here is nothing to suggest the idea of immersion; no intimation that the parties went anywhere in quest of a lake, or of a river; but all the circumstances lead to the conclusion that Saul was baptized in another manner. The conclusion which is naturally suggested is, that he was baptized in the house where he received instruction and comfort; and that he was baptized either by sprinkling or affusion.

The same observations will apply to the baptism of Cornelius and his family at Cæsarea. They were assembled together in one room, most probably in the house of Cornelius. While St. Peter was preaching Christ to them, faith came by hearing, and the Holy Spirit fell upon them; so that they immediately began to speak under His inspiration. "Then answered Peter, Can any

man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" THEN "he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts x. 46-48.) The narrative would lead us to conclude that the entire assembly, including Cornelius and his family, with "his kinsmen and near friends," were all baptized in the very place where they were met, and heard the discourse of the apostle; and that the water with which they were baptized was brought to them. No intimation whatever is given that they were all taken to some other place, where they could find a sufficient quantity of water for the purpose of immersion. And if they were baptized in a room of Cornelius's house, as the narrative suggests, we infer that sprinkling or affusion was the mode in which it was administered.

Lydia and her family were most probably baptized in the *proseucha*, or "place of prayer," where Paul and Silas preached, and where her heart was opened to receive the truth. The place was, indeed, "by the side of a river;" but no intimation is given that either she or any one of her family was immersed in its water, or even taken within its banks, when they were baptized.

The improbability that the jailer and his family, at Philippi, were baptized by immersion, is very obvious. At midnight they were awakened out of sleep by the concussion of a miraculous earthquake. Full of alarm, the jailer inquired what he must do to be saved; when Paul and Silas offered him salvation, as a free gift, through faith in Christ. "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his,

straightway." (Acts xvi. 32, 33.) Here, then, we have a family of heathens asleep at the midnight hour; they are suddenly awakened and alarmed; they receive evangelical instruction in its leading truths; they submit to be baptized; they practise hospitality; and all this is done before the morning light. There was no time to travel to any distant place in quest of deep water; nor were Paul and Silas, lacerated by the scourge, in a fit state to descend into it; nor is it, indeed, likely that the family, especially in their circumstances, and charged with the care of the prisoners, would have gone abroad at that unseasonable hour. As to a tank, or reservoir in the house, where water was kept for culinary purposes, which is a mere supposition, it is utterly unlikely that the whole family would be plunged into that. All the circumstances lead to the conclusion, that they were baptized by sprinkling or affusion, rather than by immersion; which seems perfectly inconsistent with the other transactions of that eventful night; such as the humane treatment of the suffering prisoners, in whose behalf the Almighty so signally interposed; the hospitality that was so seasonably provided; and the sacred gladness that pervaded the entire company.

Upon these various cases of Christian baptism we will offer two observations, for the purpose of showing their bearing upon our present argument.

1. The rite of baptism, as it was administered by the apostles, was of easy observance; inasmuch as we never find any delay in the administration of it, wherever the parties might be, provided their minds were prepared for it by the love of the truth. When we examine the whole of the New Testament with reference to the administration of baptism, we never find any delay



required, that the candidates might provide a change of apparel; nor any delay because water was not found in a sufficient quantity; nor any delay because of the coldness of the season; nor any delay because of the delicate health of any person, either male or female, young or old: and yet we must remember that, in countries where baptism was administered, the people had occasion to say, "He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold?" (Psalm cxlvii. 16, 17.) The apostles administered baptism during the winter's cold, as well as the summer's heat; by night, as well as by day; to women, as well as to men; to individuals, to families, to thousands of people at the same time; in the desert country, and in the crowded city: and yet when no previous preparation had been made, or even could be made, it does not appear that the delay of a single hour ever took place in the administration of the rite when the people were willing to receive it. According to the Scripture account, nothing could be more easy than the practice of Christian baptism; and hence we conclude that it could not be administered by immersion, which in some places was impossible, because a sufficient quantity of water could not be found; and at some seasons would certainly have been destructive of health, and even of life. On the other hand, the readiness with which baptism can be administered by sprinkling or affusion renders it extremely probable that it was so administered in all those diversified cases which have just occupied our attention.

2. In no case of Christian baptism, according to the New Testament, do we find the people removing to any

particular place for the administration of the rite. When the three thousand Jews, on the day of Pentecost, were convinced of the truth under the sermon of St. Peter, no intimation is given that they were divided into companies, and then each company marched off under the direction of an apostle to some place where they could meet with a body of water that was sufficiently deep for immersion. For anything that appears to the contrary, they were all baptized in the very place where the sermon of the apostle was delivered, and where they were brought to repentance. The same remark will apply to the baptism of Saul at Damascus, of Cornelius and his family at Cæsarea, and of the jailer and his family at Philippi. Now, if none of these persons were led away in quest of deep water, but, as it would appear, water was brought to them, then baptism was not administered by immersion, but by sprinkling, or by affusion.

IV. We advance, as a fourth general proposition, that sprinkling, or affusion, is more in accordance with the spirit and genius of Christianity than immersion.

In proof of this proposition we observe,—

1. That sprinkling or affusion represents most correctly the spiritual influence of which baptism is the symbol. We have seen that a sacrament is a sign or symbol of spiritual truth, as well as a seal of God's covenant of mercy with mankind. Baptism, the first of the Christian sacraments, is a form of external purification by water, and symbolizes the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit; and hence that sanctifying grace is called "baptism." (Matt. iii. 11.) We therefore look for some correspondence between the outward and the inward baptism, the baptism of water, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But where is the correspondence,

where is the resemblance, between immersion and the communication of sanctifying grace? That grace is never spoken of in Holy Scripture as an immersion, but often as a sprinkling or a pouring out of water. A few examples from the Old Testament, and a few from the New, will be sufficient to prove this point. "I will *pour water* upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will *pour* My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring." (Isaiah xlv. 3.) "I will *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25.) "This Jesus hath God raised up.....Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath *shed forth* this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts ii. 32, 33.) "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts x. 45.)

When baptism is therefore administered by sprinkling, or by pouring water upon the candidate, the sign answers exactly to the thing signified, and the entire ceremonial is equally edifying and impressive; but the reverse of this is the fact, so far as the gift of the Holy Spirit is concerned, when the rite is administered by immersion.

The truth is, to say that baptism is only administered by immersion is to contradict the very letter of Holy Scripture. John the Baptist, who certainly understood the true nature of the ordinance, speaking of our Saviour, said, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;" (Matt. iii. 11;) and our blessed

Lord, addressing His disciples, said, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts i. 5.) In what manner, then, were these promises fulfilled? By immersion? Certainly not, but by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the parties concerned. He "*fell* upon them;" He was "*poured out* upon them;" He was "*shed forth* upon them;" and in this manner did Christ "baptize" the people according to His own promise, and that of His illustrious forerunner. Did neither of them understand the proper meaning of the word "baptize?" If baptism means immersion, and nothing else, as it has often been hastily affirmed, then the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit has not yet been administered; for we never read that any of the apostles were immersed in the Holy Ghost.

2. Sprinkling, or affusion, accords the most fully with the universal character of Christianity. Judaism was the religion of one nation only. Christianity is God's one method of saving fallen men, and is intended, therefore, to be the religion of all mankind. Its doctrines are addressed to all men; and all men are required to believe them upon the testimony of God. Its salvation is offered to all men; and those who refuse to accept it will be left to perish in their sin. Its precepts and institutions are binding upon all men, and are both designed and adapted to secure the benefit of all. Our blessed Lord, therefore, directed His servants not only to preach the Gospel to every creature, but also to baptize all nations: for as there is one Gospel, and one salvation, so there is one baptism. But some nations inhabit regions of ice and snow, where immersion, during a great part of the year, is impracticable, especially in the case of sick and delicate persons

Will it be said, Let such persons, when they are convinced of the truth of the Gospel, and desire to comply with its requirements, defer their baptism till the return of summer? The answer is, This is not in the record. No exception is made by our blessed Lord in behalf of those who are in a state of infirm health; nor are missionaries allowed to suspend their labours, so that no conversions may take place during the rigours of a northern winter. The apostles, as we have seen, were not wont to defer the administration of baptism for a day, or even an hour, when the candidates were morally prepared for it. With them no ordinance of Christ was impracticable. Besides, life is short and uncertain; people are dying every day; and are penitent men and women, who desire to comply with their Lord's will, to die in the neglect of the sacrament by which their right to salvation is recognised, because it cannot be administered but at the certain hazard of life? and are the infant children of God's people to be left without the seal of His covenant of mercy, to which He has given them a gracious right, so as even to die without it? Such are the painful consequences to which the rigid theory of immersion leads, and which are not at all provided for by any principles that are laid down in Holy Scripture: but these consequences are not at all connected with the practice of sprinkling, or of affusion; which is therefore more perfectly accordant with the universal religion of Christ, whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light.

3. Sprinkling, or affusion, is beyond comparison the best adapted to that calm and recollected state of mind in which an adult person should receive that holy sacrament which is the subject of our present inquiry. Baptism, as we have formerly seen, is a covenanting



ordinance. When an adult person, therefore, receives it, on renouncing heathenism, there should be in him a believing apprehension of Christ, and of the blessings of salvation through Him. At the same time he should make an entire surrender of himself to Christ, with a fixed purpose to be the willing subject and servant of God to the end of life. In order to this, the man should, as much as possible, be in the full possession of his mental faculties, and free from distraction of thought. But the act of immersion necessarily gives to the whole frame such a shock as produces a violent sobbing, and thus destroys that mental recollection which is infinitely desirable in a transaction of this high and sacred importance. When the act of immersion is over, there follows the change of raiment, with, perhaps, the interference of friends, which is incompatible with the deep religious feeling that ought to be cherished without interruption. When the rite is administered in what we conceive to be the scriptural mode of sprinkling, or affusion, this inconvenience is completely obviated. The mode which conduces most to edification is in the fullest accordance with the spirit of the Gospel, and therefore to be preferred.

4. There is nothing in any Scripture allusion that leads to a contrary conclusion. There are, however, two texts which have often been adduced as containing an undoubted allusion to baptism by immersion, which we will therefore carefully examine. The first of these texts is, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even also we so should walk in

newness of life." (Rom. vi. 3, 4.) The other text is, "In whom" (that is, in Christ) "also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." (Col. ii. 11, 12.)

It is confessed that these texts do not assert that baptism was administered by immersion in the apostolic age; but it is alleged that they contain an allusion to the practice, and therefore the practice must have prevailed. Baptism, it is added, must, according to these texts, have been performed in such a manner as to represent the burial and resurrection of Christ; and how can these momentous events be represented by baptism, unless it be administered by immersion? It is well known that Mr. Wesley, in his notes upon these texts, gives this view of the subject, and mentions "baptizing by immersion as the ancient manner." Yet in his notes upon those particular texts of the New Testament which speak of the actual administration of baptism, he says there is no proof that either John or the apostles of our Lord ever baptized by immersion; and he has asserted the same thing in the *Treatise on baptism*, which he adopted from "a late writer," and published with his own name. In that treatise he declares that nothing can be justly inferred in favour of immersion from the two texts to which we have now referred. and he adds, "There is no clear proof of dipping in Scripture." \* So that if there be an allusion to dipping in the two

\* Wesley's Works, vol. x., p. 189. Octavo edition.

texts before us, it is an allusion to a something which no man can prove to have ever existed. The fact is, that the concession in favour of immersion, which Mr. Wesley copied from Doddridge's "Family Expositor," is an inadvertency, directly opposed to the judgment which he has recorded in other places.

That baptism by immersion does not, in point of fact, represent the burial and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and that there is therefore no allusion to the practice of it in the words of the apostle, must, we think, be manifest to every one who considers the subject with an unbiassed attention. Take, for example, an ordinary case of burial, such as is of daily occurrence in our own country. A grave is dug perpendicularly in the earth; the dead body is deposited in it; the grave is then filled up with earth, which is thrown upon the body. In this entire process there is nothing that corresponds with the dipping of a body in water. Such a mode of interment is indeed more exactly represented by the sprinkling or the pouring of water: for, as Mr. Wesley says, in his Treatise on Baptism, "in burying, the body is not plunged through the substance of the earth, but rather, earth is poured or sprinkled upon it."

But this is not the manner in which our blessed Saviour was buried. His sepulchre was not formed like our graves, but was a cavern hewn out of the solid rock; and the bottom of it appears to have been nearly on a level with the ground, or only a little below the surface of it. Abraham, Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob were all buried in "the *cave* that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan." (Gen. xlix. 30-33.) The grave of Lazarus, of

Bethany, was of the same kind. "It was a *cave*, and a stone lay upon it." (John xi. 38.) Such, also, was the grave of our Saviour, as is manifest from the accounts which are given by the four evangelists. It was cut out of the rock in a garden belonging to Joseph of Arimathea, near to the place where the cross had stood. There the body of Jesus was hastily laid, wrapped in linen cloth, with a considerable quantity of spices, "as the manner of the Jews is to bury." (John xix. 39, 40.) It was not laid in a grave, such as we are accustomed to witness, and then covered with earth; for as soon as the Sabbath was ended, while it was yet dark, the women came with additional spices, which they intended to apply to the body of their Lord; but this they could not have done, had the body been covered with earth, in a grave of any considerable depth. They knew that a stone had been rolled to the *door* of the sepulchre; and this they regarded as the only difficulty in their way. On their arrival, they found the stone removed, and the sepulchre empty. It is further stated that they went into the sepulchre, where they were accosted by two angels, who told them the Lord was risen, pointing to the place where He had lain, and to the grave-clothes He had left behind.

With these facts before us, we perceive that the assumed allusion to baptism by immersion, in the phrase, "buried with Him by baptism," is a mere figment of imagination, for which there is no authority whatever. For what resemblance can there be between the immersion of a human body in water, and the burying and resurrection of Christ? The body of our Lord was placed in a cavern; the entrance into it was not from above, but in the side of the rock; not a particle

of earth was thrown upon the body, and much less was it covered with earth. When He rose from the dead, an angel rolled away the stone which was placed at the doorway of the sepulchre, so that there was nothing to obstruct His passage from the tomb. The doorway appears to have been somewhat low; for St. John states that when he looked into the sepulchre, he "stooped down." (John xx. 5.) In the plea, therefore, that when the apostle says, "buried with Him by baptism," he alludes to baptism by immersion, we have nothing more than two unauthorised assumptions: first, that the apostles administered baptism by immersion, which has never yet been proved; and, secondly, that there is a resemblance between the immersion of a body in water, and the burying and resurrection of Christ, which is contrary to fact. As well might we attempt to find a resemblance between the mode of baptism and the crucifixion of our Lord, because it is said, "As many of us as have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into His death," as to discover a correspondence between the mode of baptism and the interment and resurrection of His body.

Should it be asked, What, then, does St. Paul mean by the expression, "buried with Him by baptism?" the answer is obvious. He teaches, as he does in various other places of his writings, that there is in all true believers a mystical conformity to Christ their Lord. He died *for* sin; and they die *to* sin. (1 Peter iv. i. 2; Rom. vi. 8-11.) He died by crucifixion; and they "have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts;" their "old man is crucified with Him," and they are also "crucified to the world." (Gal. v. 24; Rom. vi. 6; Gal. vi. 14.) He was buried, and thus concealed



from the view of men, and removed from all intercourse with the world. They are also "buried with Him," in the sense of being separated from the spirit and example of the present evil world, and from their former sinful and corrupt practices. He was raised from the dead. They are risen with Him; risen from the death of sin, having, as it were, left their former character in the grave, and risen to newness of life. (Col. iii. 1.) He is "alive for evermore;" "death hath no more dominion over Him." They also live a life which is spiritual, Divine, and heavenly. (Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 3.) He is seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly places; and they are also "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. i. 3, 20.) When baptism is rightly received in penitence and faith, its covenant character being practically recognised, it is the entrance upon the Christian life, in which all this mystical conformity to Christ is actually realised. When the apostle says, "We are buried with Christ by baptism," he does not mean the bare administration of the rite; but under the term "baptism" he clearly comprehends all that baptism signifies: just as St. Peter does, when he says that we are "saved by baptism;" and then explains himself by adding, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh;" this does not save us, the mere washing away of external impurity; but such a change in our state and character as produces "the answer of a good conscience toward God." (1 Peter iii. 21.)

It is further worthy of special observation, that when Christian baptism is administered by sprinkling, or affusion, it answers to the national baptism which the Hebrew tribes received when they passed from the state of Egyptian bondage on their way to the rest of

Canaan, and which God Himself administered, and not man. “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” (1 Cor. x. 1, 2.) The tribes, having long dwelt among a heathen people, and in a land that was full of idols, had become nationally unclean; and, therefore, when they left that land of darkness and sin, they underwent a purification by baptism, preparatory to the giving of the law, and their entrance into solemn covenant with God. This baptism was administered “in the cloud, and in the sea.” A cloud went before them; the sea stood like a wall on either hand; and the people passed through on dry ground. (Exod. xiv. 19–22.) They were not immersed in the cloud, for it was above them; nor in the sea, for the ground was dry under their tread. Baptism, therefore, in their case, was administered by sprinkling; drops of water falling upon them from the cloud above, and from the sea on either hand. There was, indeed, immersion in this case, but it was not baptism; it was no sacrament of grace, but a judgment from God upon the Egyptian armies, with the infatuated king at their head, who all perished in the great deep. When the people of Israel were “baptized unto Moses,” as the chosen servant of God, the rite was not administered by human hands, but by the hand Divine; and it was administered not by immersion, but by sprinkling, or affusion, the water falling upon the people from above. In like manner now, when Jews and heathen men pass from the Egypt of their fallen state, and enter into covenant with God, so far as we are able to understand the sacred oracles, they

should be baptized in the same ancient and significant manner.

With respect to the Christians who differ from us in regard of the subjects and the mode of baptism, they are not accountable to us, nor are we authorised to sit in judgment upon them. To their own Master they must give an account both of their principles and practice. Many of them have been, and still are, examples of all that is holy, upright, and benevolent in Christianity; and with such men we hope to meet in the house of our common Father in heaven. But for denying baptism to the children of God's people, for rebaptizing those whom their fellow-servants have baptized by sprinkling, and for subjecting all the persons over whom they can gain sufficient control to the dangerous, inconvenient, and somewhat indecent practice of public immersion, we praise them not. When, in addition to this, they put forth strenuous efforts, not to turn sinners to righteousness, but to make proselytes, by perplexing the minds of sincere Christians of other denominations, and when they repeat an ordinance which, in respect of the same person, ought never to be administered more than once, we would meekly but firmly "withstand them to the face," because we conscientiously think they "are to be blamed."

Through the whole of this discussion, respecting the mode of baptism, we have endeavoured to make Scripture its own interpreter. Several writers on baptism have ransacked the literature of heathen Greece for the purpose of ascertaining the exact and proper meaning of the term "baptize," and consequently the mode in which baptism ought to be administered in the Christian church. But we conceive this is not the manner in

which questions of this nature are to be determined. The Bible has a phraseology of its own; and the true sense of Scripture, generally speaking, can only be discovered by a comparison of one part with another. The writers of the New Testament did, indeed, use the Greek language; but they applied Greek terms to subjects which the most polished of the Greek writers never understood. The references and allusions with respect to thought and expression, which are to be traced in the New Testament, except in rare cases, are not references to the writers of classic Greek, but to Moses and the prophets. If it could be proved, with all the clearness of demonstration, that the strict etymological meaning of the Greek word βαπτίζω is to *dip*, to *immerse*, it would not follow that the baptism which Christ instituted is to be always administered by dipping, or immersion, because it is undeniable that the Holy Ghost has applied the term "baptism" to other modes of purification by water; such as sprinkling, affusion, and washing in general. "Custom is the master of language: and if any one will pretend to so much reason as to tell the signification of words from the bare etymology, contrary to custom's interpretation, the world will but laugh at him; for how well soever he plays his part, he will but tell us how such words *should* be used, and not how they *are* used; and therefore he will help us to the right understanding of no man's words or writings thereby."\*

We do not make these remarks for the purpose of intimating that the Christians who administer baptism by sprinkling have any reason to be alarmed because of

\* Baxter's "Disputations of Right to Sacraments," p. 426. Edition of 1658.

the scholarship that has been sometimes arrayed against them ; for the advocates of sprinkling, so far as sound learning is concerned, have been at least equal to the advocates of immersion : and even among devout and spiritually-minded Christians, the men who have practised immersion have been, and still are, a small minority. Such is the fact, however it may be accounted for.



## XVIII.—THE LORD'S SUPPER.

NEXT to baptism, THE SUPPER OF THE LORD claims our attention, as the second sacrament of the Gospel dispensation. The teaching of Holy Scripture on this subject, we think, may be comprised in four propositions, which we will proceed at once to state, explain, and establish.

I. The Lord's supper is to be regarded as an impressive memorial of the death of Christ.

The truth of this proposition will appear from the following texts, which describe the origin of this sacred institution :—"And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you : this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." (Luke xxii. 19, 20.) "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread : and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat : this is My body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of Me" (or, "for a remembrance of Me," as the marginal rendering is). "After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood : this do ye, as

oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show" (or, "show ye") "the Lord's death till He come." (1 Cor. xi. 23-26.)

With these scriptures before us, it is natural to inquire what there is in the death of Christ, of such transcendent importance, that it is made the subject of so solemn a memorial, which is to be perpetuated in the church until the end of time. The only satisfactory answer is, that the death of Christ was a sacrifice for sin. It was the price of the world's redemption. It was the penalty of transgression, inflicted upon the innocent and righteous Substitute of our guilty race. The death of Christ is therefore to be regarded,—

1. As the brightest manifestation of the Divine perfections. It exhibits the love of God in all its pitying tenderness; His justice in all its inflexibility; His holiness in all the strength and intensity of its opposition to sin; and His wisdom in all the depth of its resources, solving the most difficult of all problems, the exercise of mercy to the guilty, and the maintenance of law in unimpaired majesty.

2. It is the grand medium of all communications from God to men. Every blessing, both of providence and grace, is given by God with respect to the propitiatory sacrifice of His Son: for all the good that man enjoyed under the first covenant was forfeited by the fall. And hence it is that the blessings of a bountiful providence, access to God in prayer, the forgiveness of sin, the gift of the Holy Ghost, Divine guidance and comfort in life, hope in death, and admission into heaven, are all the free donations of our Heavenly Father's love, which He vouchsafes to men through the

death and intercession of His Son, as the one Mediator between Himself and sinful men.

3. It supplies the most powerful motives to a holy and obedient life. By the sacrifice of the cross Christ has "condemned sin in the flesh." All who believe in Him are therefore to "reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin," and bound to "live" exclusively "unto righteousness;" so as even to "fulfil the righteousness of the law." His precepts and example are to be their only rule of action, and His glory their constant and undivided aim. Redeemed by the blood of Christ, they are His exclusive property, and are bound to present themselves to Him habitually as a holy living sacrifice, constrained thus to live by a deep and affecting sense of His love to them.

4. It supplies the most impressive motive to mutual love amongst mankind. The Son of God gave Himself a ransom for all; and hence our obligation to love every human being, however abject may be his condition, and however degraded by ignorance, vice, and crime, and that with an ardent and tender affection, for his Redeemer's sake. The cross supplies the most powerful of all inducements to universal charity and benevolence. When it is universally apprehended and felt, wars and contentions will cease to the ends of the earth.

5. Hence it is that the sacrificial death of Christ is never to be forgotten. Upon the Socinian scheme the doctrine and example of Christ are entitled to the supreme attention of professed Christians; but, according to apostolic teaching, it is in "the cross" that they are especially to "glory." They are not only to have it in their daily and hourly remembrance; but at stated times they are to prepare themselves, by prayer and self-

examination, for a solemn and formal commemoration of it by unitedly "eating of that bread, and drinking of that cup."

II. That the Lord's supper is an instructive symbol of Divine truth.

1. It serves to illustrate the nature of faith in Christ. The high importance of such a faith is attested throughout the New Testament ; for it is by faith in Him that the benefits of His mediation are obtained ; and the want of faith in Him involves continuance under the guilt and curse of sin in this world, and perdition in the world to come. (John iii. 18, 36.) What, then, is the faith in Christ upon which such momentous consequences are made to depend ? The answer is, It is not a bare assent to the fact, that He is the Christ of God, accompanied by a formal attendance upon His ordinances, and by a profession of His religion. It is a penitent and believing acknowledgment of Him as having assumed our nature, and died in our stead ; and as thus becoming to us the Author of eternal life. Such a faith He describes as an eating of His flesh, and a drinking of His blood. In proof of this we might refer to His very sublime discourse addressed to the Jews in the synagogue of Capernaum, and recorded by St. John. It is a great mistake to suppose that He is there speaking of the sacrament of His last supper, which at that time was not instituted. He is there speaking of His incarnation, of His sacrificial death, and of that personal faith in Him which is the appointed means and condition of salvation. To be refreshed and strengthened by bread and wine, we must eat the one and drink the other. To be saved through the incarnation and the death of Christ, we must "receive Him"

in His human and sacrificial character ; and this receiving of Him our blessed Lord speaks of as an eating of His flesh, and a drinking of His blood. (John vi. 51-57.) "I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this Man give us His flesh to eat ? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father : so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." To show that it is not a carnal eating and drinking of which He here speaks, as the Romanists suppose, who imagine that Jesus is here discoursing of the sacramental bread and wine, He adds, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." In this manner our blessed Lord teaches us that life, spiritual and eternal, is derived from Him, and from Him only ; that faith is the principle by which this great blessing is received and enjoyed ; and that, to be thus efficacious, faith must have respect to Him as having been manifested in the flesh, and as having died for our sins : truths which are symbolically represented in the holy supper.

2. The Lord's supper symbolizes, in a manner no



less instructive, the union with Christ which is realised by faith. "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." (John vi. 56.) As in the marriage relation, the husband and the wife are one flesh ; so believers in Christ are one with Him, and in a manner still more perfect. He "dwells in their hearts by faith ;" (Eph. iii. 17 ;) and at the same time they "are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John v. 20.) He is so identified with their very being, that they are said to be "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." (Eph. v. 30.) We cannot conceive of a more perfect symbol of this union than that which is contained in the act of eating and drinking the sacred elements which represent His body and blood. The bread and wine are incorporated with our very being, so as to become a part of our substance ; and, by a vital faith in Christ, we become one with Him, so as to partake of His holy nature.

3. The Lord's supper also symbolizes the union which subsists between all true believers. To this subject St. Paul refers where he says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body : for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.) Christ is one ; His body is one ; His blood is one ; and believers, being joined to Him by a living faith, have all the same communion with Him, and therefore with each other. They have one Saviour, one faith, one salvation, one hope ; and hence the peculiarity of their union. All this is represented in the holy supper, where the rich and the poor, the young disciple and the aged Christian, the

Jew and the Gentile, the bond and the free, male and female, all eat of one bread, and drink of one cup, which represent the sacrificial death of their common Saviour. Nothing can surpass the simplicity of this ordinance, in respect of its outward form ; and nothing can exceed the sublimity of the instruction which it is designed and adapted to impart.

III. The Lord's supper is a very important means of grace. By this is meant a means through which it pleases God to communicate the grace of His Holy Spirit, so as to strengthen in His people every heavenly principle and affection.

1. It is a means of strengthening their faith. It has been already observed, that saving faith has an especial respect to the death of Christ, regarded as a sacrifice for sin. In this ordinance the attention of the devout and thoughtful communicant is directed to this one object, inasmuch as Christ crucified is, in the sacramental elements, evidently set forth before his eyes. While such a communicant views his Saviour expiating the sins of men by the sacrifice of the Cross,—a sacrifice which is every way perfect,—his faith is called into exercise, and by exercise is strengthened and confirmed, till, like Abraham, the feeble believer becomes “strong in faith, giving glory to God.” (Rom. iv. 20.) In this manner the Holy Spirit, by means of even the outward senses, carries on and completes His work in the souls of men.

2. The Lord's supper is no less a means, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, of exciting and strengthening the principle of love to Christ. In the absence of this love, there is no true religion ; and our advancement in Christian godliness is to be ascertained by the

increase of this heavenly disposition. But where can it be so effectually stimulated as at the sacramental table, where the memorials of redeeming mercy are placed before us? It is when we obtain just and impressive views of Christ's love to us, that our love to Him is called forth and inflamed; and such views are especially obtained in an ordinance which impressively presents to the mind the solemn scenes of Gethsemane and of Calvary. When the heart feels the tenderness of the mercy which submitted to bear our curse and shame, it dissolves in grateful love to Him who has thus magnified His mercy beyond all example and all thought. "We love Him because He first loved us."

3. The Lord's supper is equally adapted to call forth the deepest humility. Upon this element of the Christian character the greatest stress is laid by our blessed Lord and His holy apostles, who declare that the proud shall ever be abased, and the lowly exalted. But nothing serves so effectually to humble us as the cross of Christ. When we behold Him in His agony, His prayers, and His tears, as He hangs bleeding upon the cross, we are forcibly reminded of our sins, the guilt of which could not be taken away by a less costly sacrifice; and then it is that the loftiest spirit bows before the Lord in lowliness and shame, accepts salvation as a free gift, and is prepared by this self-abasement for all that fulness of grace which the Gospel reveals and offers.

4. Nor is brotherly love less promoted by the blessing of God upon this holy ordinance. This love is the "charity" of which St. Paul has given so beautiful a description, and the want of which leaves men no more, in the estimation of their righteous Judge, than "sound-

ing brass, or a tinkling cymbal." The disciples of the Lord Jesus, when surrounding His table, are, as a matter of course, supposed to be "in love and charity with one another;" and the ordinance itself is well adapted to foster and stimulate this holy feeling. While they kneel before their Saviour, and are in the very act of receiving the hallowed symbols of His death and passion,—the death and passion upon which all their safety, happiness, and hope depend,—how just and impressive must they regard the apostolic admonition,—"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel" (or matter of "complaint") "against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (Col. iii. 12, 13.) If malignant tempers are ever felt to be sinful, and utterly alien from the spirit of Christianity, it must be at the table of the Lord, where the mercy of God in Christ is seen in all its tenderness and condescension.

IV. We must especially remember, that the supper of the Lord is a covenanting ordinance. In this light it is spoken of by our Saviour Himself. "This is My blood of the new testament,"—*διαθήκης*, "covenant,"—"which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi. 28.) "This cup is the new testament"—*διαθήκη*, "covenant"—"in My blood, which is shed for you." (Luke xxii. 20.)

In these words of our blessed Lord there is a manifest allusion to a significant part of the Jewish ceremonial, of which an account is given Exod. xxiv. 6-8: "And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he

took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." These transactions are eminently instructive. God entered into a covenant with the tribes of Israel, engaging to be their God, so as to bestow upon them unnumbered blessings in their several generations, on the express condition that they should obey the laws which He gave them. This covenant was written in a book, which contained an exact record of the duties they were to perform, and the blessings they were to receive and enjoy. This covenant was ratified by sacrificial blood, a part of which was sprinkled upon the altar of God, to denote expiation, and the turning away of His wrath; a part of the same blood was sprinkled upon the people, to denote their purification from the defilement of sin, and consequent reconciliation with God. St. Paul also states that "when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament" (*διαθήκης*, "covenant") "which God hath enjoined unto you." (Heb. ix. 19, 20.) The sprinkling of the book was doubtless intended to denote the confirmation of the covenant which it contained, both parties pledging themselves to a strict fulfilment of their engagements. In accordance with this phraseology, we find that the sacrificial blood of Christ is called "the blood of the everlasting covenant" of grace into which God hath entered



with fallen men ; (Heb. xiii. 20 ;) so that when the shedding of that "precious blood" is set forth in the holy supper, the Lord of the feast declares His fidelity to His covenant promises, and the guests pledge themselves to an obedient compliance with His will.

On these grounds we call the Lord's supper, as well as baptism, a covenanting ordinance. No man can receive the salvation of God, but in the manner which God Himself has prescribed. In every man, therefore, who aspires to the enjoyment of that salvation, there must be a renunciation of sin, a penitent confession of it to God, a believing acceptance of Christ in all His offices, with a sincere purpose for the time to come to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless : and as often as any man comes to the table of the Lord, he in effect renews his vows, and binds himself afresh to the Lord his Saviour.

In this view the apostolic admonition is exceedingly appropriate : "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (1 Cor. xi. 28.) The reason is obvious, and is thus suggested by the apostle himself : "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils : ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." (1 Cor. x. 21.) Christianity implies a renunciation of heathenism, with all its polluting rites ; and therefore the man who adheres to any of them must not presume to come to the table of the Lord ; for Christ and idols can never be reconciled. "No idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." He must not therefore presume to come to the table of the Lord ; for he has no just claim upon any of God's covenant blessings, and therefore no right to the sacramental seal

by which that covenant is confirmed. The same is true of every man who indulges himself in wilful sin, let the sin be what it may. He does not “discern the Lord’s body ;” for his eye is not single. His service is either formal or hypocritical. He enters not into the design of the holy ordinance, but uses it in a profane manner. He “eats and drinks unworthily,” so as to aggravate his guilt, and increase his condemnation, rather than to receive any spiritual benefit, according to the holy and benevolent design of God in the ordinance.

As it pleases God to convert and sanctify the souls of men by the instrumentality of His truth, all departures from that truth are to be earnestly deprecated, because they weaken its influence, and thus interfere with the best interests of mankind. The assumed innocence of mental error is a subject upon which many people delight to expatiate ; but their lax theories derive no countenance from the word of God. To a great extent the ministry of our blessed Lord was an attack upon the errors which in His day obtained currency in the Jewish church ; the apostolic writings, and especially the Epistles of St. Paul, present a zealous exposure of the Jewish and heathen errors which were early developed in the Christian societies ; and, judging from these examples, the ministers of Christ should consider themselves as “set for the defence of the Gospel,” as well as for an exposition and enforcement of its momentous truths.

On no subject have more flagrant errors prevailed in the Christian church, than on the supper of the Lord. The most injurious and prevalent of these we will endeavour briefly to refute, for the benefit of those who desire to honour God in this holy ordinance.

I. The first error that we will specify is that of transubstantiation, which the Church of Rome strenuously maintains, and for the defence of which she has wantonly shed the blood of many a faithful servant of God. By the Papal doctrine of transubstantiation is meant, that by the act of consecration the bread and wine of the Lord's supper are changed into the real body and blood of the Son of God ; so that, although these sacred elements retain the colour, and shape, and weight, and taste of bread and wine, they are in reality bread and wine no longer, but the real body and blood of our blessed Saviour, in personal union with His soul and His Divinity, and as such are entitled to the highest forms of religious worship. In charging upon a religious community a tenet so monstrous, we ought to have the clearest evidence. We will therefore adduce, not a private testimony, but the authority of the Council of Trent, which was held at the time of the Protestant Reformation, and is acknowledged by the Church of Rome herself to have faithfully and infallibly expounded her doctrines. Thus she speaks in the canons of that Council, session xiii., canon 1 :—

“ Whosoever shall deny that in the most holy sacrament of the eucharist there are truly, really, and substantially contained the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, together with His soul and Divinity, and consequently Christ entire ; but shall affirm that He is present therein only in a sign or figure, or by His power : let him be accursed.

“ Whosoever shall affirm that in the most holy sacrament of the eucharist there remains the substance of the bread and wine, together with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and shall deny that wonderful

and peculiar conversion of the whole substance of the wine into His blood, the species only of bread and wine remaining, which conversion the Catholic Church most fitly terms ‘transubstantiation :’ let him be accursed.

“Whosoever shall affirm that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, is not to be adored in the holy eucharist with the external signs of that worship which is due to God ; and therefore that the eucharist is not to be honoured with extraordinary festive celebration, nor solemnly carried about in processions, according to the laudable and universal rites and customs of holy church, nor publicly presented to the people for their adoration ; and that those who worship the same are idolaters : let him be accursed.”

In refutation of this doctrine, which is so confidently asserted that a malediction is pronounced upon all who deny it, we observe,—

1. That it is founded in ignorance of Scripture phraseology. On this point it will only be necessary to adduce the very pertinent observations of Dr. Adam Clarke. The Romanists assume that when our Saviour said, in the act of instituting the holy supper, “This is My body,” and “This is My blood,” He intended that His words should be literally understood. To this assumption the Doctor replies, “In the Scriptures, as they stand in the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Chaldæo-Syriac languages, there is no term which expresses to *mean*, *signify*, *denote*, though both the Greek and Latin abound with them : hence the Hebrews use a figure, and say *it is*, for *it signifies*. So Gen. xli. 26, 27 : ‘The seven kine **ARE**’ (*i. e.*, represent) ‘seven years.’ Dan. vii. 24 : ‘These ten horns **ARE**’ (*i. e.*, signify) ‘ten kings.’ And following this Hebrew idiom, though

the work is written in Greek, we find in Rev. i. 20 : 'The seven stars ARE' (represent) 'the angels of the seven churches : and the seven candlesticks.....ARE' (represent) 'the seven churches.' The same form of speech is used in a variety of places in the New Testament, where this sense must necessarily be given to the word. Matt. xiii. 38, 39 : 'The field IS' (represents) 'the world ; the good seed ARE' (represent or signify) 'the children of the kingdom. The tares ARE' (signify) 'the children of the wicked one ; the enemy IS' (signifies) 'the devil ; the harvest IS' (represents) 'the end of the world ; the reapers ARE' (signify) 'the angels.'

"This form of speech is common, even in our own language, though we have terms enough to fill up the ellipsis. Suppose a man entering into a museum, enriched with the remains of ancient Greek sculpture ; his eyes are attracted by a number of curious busts ; and on inquiring what they are, he learns that this IS Socrates, that is Plato, a third IS Homer ; others ARE Hesiod, Horace, Virgil, Demosthenes, Cicero, Herodotus, Livy, Cæsar, Nero, Vespasian, &c. Is he deceived by this information ? Not at all. He knows well that the busts he sees are not the identical persons of those ancient philosophers, poets, orators, historians, and emperors, but only REPRESENTATIONS of their persons in sculpture ; between which and the originals there is as essential a difference as between a human body, instinct with all the principles of rational vitality, and a block of marble. When, therefore, Christ took up a piece of bread, brake it, and said, 'This IS My body,' who but the most stupid of mortals could imagine that He was at the same time handling and



breaking His own body ? Would not any person of plain common sense see as great a difference between the man Christ Jesus and the piece of bread, as between the block of marble and the philosopher it represented, in the case referred to above ? ” \*

To this reasoning it is only requisite to add, that the Romanists themselves are compelled to acknowledge that the Lord Jesus used figurative language in the institution of the holy supper, employing the term “cup” to denote the wine which the cup contained. “Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.” (Luke xxii. 20.) “He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood.” “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.” (1 Cor. xi. 25, 26.) To be consistent with themselves, the Romanists must maintain that the term “cup,” when used by our Lord, is to be literally understood ; and that by the act of consecration the cup which contains the sacramental wine is transubstantiated into the blood of the Son of God, so as to be a cup no longer, however it may retain its shape and solidity. Why do they not profess to drink it ? Such a theory is not a whit more absurd than that which they advocate.

2. The Papal doctrine of transubstantiation overturns all evidence, even that by which Christianity itself is supported. Here are two substances before us, bread and wine, acknowledged to be such. Certain words of consecration are used ; yet the substances present not the slightest appearance of any change in their nature. They are the same in colour, weight, shape, and taste.

\* Discourses, vol. iii., pp. 49, 51, 52. Edition of 1836.

Yet we are told that they are no longer bread and wine, but the real body and blood of Christ : the identical body that was born of the Virgin Mary and nailed to the cross, and the blood that flowed from the wounds in His hands, His feet, His side. We answer, that the body of our Lord possessed various members, with organs of sight, of speech, of hearing, and the power of self-motion ; that, possessed of His body, He ate, and drank, He spake, He sat, He walked, He slept ; but that these elements of the Lord's supper possess none of these attributes, either before or after the act of consecration ; and to say that our senses are unable to distinguish between a human body and bread and wine, is to involve us in inextricable perplexity. Our Saviour, for instance, said that He would rise from the dead ; and He put the question of His Divine mission upon that issue. The apostles tell us that they saw Him alive, heard Him speak, and touched Him, after He had been crucified and buried. But if our senses deceive us with respect to the holy eucharist, may not the senses of the apostles have deceived them in the matter of His resurrection ? nay, in the matter of the miracles He is alleged to have wrought ? we may add, in the matter of Christ's appearance in the world at all ? We have no proof of the incarnation of the Son of God, but the testimony of the men who report concerning Him what they heard and saw ; that is, the testimony of men who judged according to the evidence of their senses. Take away that evidence, in respect of the Lord's supper, and you not only undermine the whole Gospel revelation, but introduce a principle of universal scepticism. If our senses are not to be credited, how do we know, when we take up the New Testament, that

it contains a narrative of our Saviour's life? nay, how do we know that it is a book, and not a stone? How do we know that the members of our own families are human beings, and not dogs and horses? If our senses are not to be believed, how do we know that there is any one object in nature to declare the existence of an almighty Creator? The tenet of transubstantiation, then, by destroying all evidence, by necessary consequence subverts all religion, both natural and revealed.

3. The doctrine of transubstantiation is utterly useless. There is no ascertainable benefit arising from it, supposing it to be true. It seems, indeed, to exalt the priesthood, who are assumed to possess the power of working a constant miracle; but then the alleged miracle proves nothing, because no man can judge of its reality. The miracles of Christ, and of His apostles, were tangible facts, which struck the senses of mankind, and carried their own evidence along with them; but the assumed miracle of transubstantiation is involved in such impenetrable mystery, that it awakens suspicion, rather than produces rational conviction. The belief that priests possess the power of transubstantiation, may induce a feeling of wonder and terror in the laity; but what benefit do they derive from this feeling? Not man, but God, is the object of saving faith. We ask, For what purpose are the bread and wine transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ? Is it that we may worship Him? That is not at all necessary. We can worship Him just as well without such a transubstantiation as with it. The doctrine of our Saviour's incarnation, as it is stated in the Holy Scriptures, is every way worthy of God. There was an end to be answered by that wonderful transaction. He was incar-

nated that He might expiate the sin of men, and redeem the world from the curse of God's violated law. These great objects are accomplished, and accomplished for ever. What purpose, then, we ask, is to be gained by this incessant transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of the Son of God? We still urge the question, What? and we receive no answer that can satisfy any rational and inquiring mind.

4. The doctrine of transubstantiation, against which we contend, is not only useless, but most pernicious.

(1.) It has led to the mutilation of the Lord's supper. This holy sacrament, as it was instituted by Christ, comprehends both the bread and the wine; and thus it was administered by the apostles. (1 Cor. xi. 25-29.)

The Council of Trent directs that the priests only shall receive this sacrament in its complete form, the cup being withheld from the laity. Five reasons are given for this regulation, the principal of which is, that as the blood is contained in the body of Christ, it is, of course, taken with the body by every communicant; so that to communicate in both kinds is unnecessary. The holy fathers, in the plenitude of their infallibility, forgot that this reason applies with as much force to the priest as to the people. If they receive the wine with the bread, so does the priest; why, then, does he receive the cup? And did not these presumptuous men remember, that Jesus Christ and His apostles knew that the blood is in the body? Yet they administered this holy sacrament in both kinds. But the truth is, if the blood is in the body, the wine is not in the bread; both of which, therefore, ought to be given to every communicant, according to the institution of Christ, and the practice of His apostles. Fearful is the punishment

that would be awarded to the private citizen who should take upon himself to alter the statutes of the realm ; but greater still is the guilt of the men who assume authority to alter the laws and ordinances of God, which He has recorded in His own word.

(2.) Connected with the dogma of transubstantiation is the alleged sacrifice of the mass. The Church of Rome teaches that the holy eucharist is a sacrifice offered to God ; and that by this sacrifice an atonement is made for the sins both of the living and the dead ; thus diverting the attention of mankind from that perfect and only available sacrifice for sin which our Saviour offered upon the cross, and offered once for all ; and leading bereaved families to imagine that the state of the dead can be improved by priestly acts of which the Bible knows nothing.

(3.) Upon the ground of transubstantiation it is that the Church of Rome enjoins upon her members, as matter of duty, the worship of the consecrated bread, under the name of "the host." After the act of consecration, the bread is lifted up, and the entire congregation are directed to kneel, to cover their faces, and to unite in an act of the highest religious homage. In Papal countries the sacred elements are carried about, and the people in the streets are required to worship them as they pass. Thus the honour which is due exclusively to the sovereign Lord of earth and heaven is given by millions of people to a piece of bread !

5. The doctrine of transubstantiation is positively self-contradictory, and therefore incredible. It assumes that our blessed Lord held Himself in His own hands, and then ate and drank Himself ; that the disciples ate and drank Him, while they sat with Him at table, kept



their eyes fixed upon Him, and were engaged with Him in conversation; that, after they had eaten Him, they went with Him to the garden of Gethsemane, conversing with Him by the way, then witnessing His agony, and afterwards His crucifixion. It assumes that a human body may be dead and alive, and in a million of distant places, at the same moment; having all the while the appearance of nothing but a piece of bread! The man who can believe all these absurdities and contradictions, and call them the religion which the God of truth and wisdom hath revealed to mankind, and which He requires them to receive, on pain of His endless displeasure, dishonours at once his own intellect, and the gracious Being from whom he has received it. Yet, for denying these blasphemous absurdities, how many faithful men have endured indescribable tortures and a martyr's death! Verily it was not in vain that these noble confessors bore their testimony against these sinful perversions of revealed truth; nor is it any marvel that in Papal countries the educated classes are mostly infidels. "The Papists' faith is too big for all men to agree upon; or all their own, if they enforced it not with arguments drawn from fire, the halter, and the strappado." \*

II. The second error that we will specify, as connected with the Lord's supper, is that of consubstantiation, which was held by Luther, and is understood to be the recognised doctrine of the churches which bear his name. It differs from transubstantiation in this,—that, after the act of consecration, the bread and wine are assumed to continue, but the real body and blood of Christ are identified *with* them in some mysterious and

\* Baxter's "Reformed Pastor," p. 204. Edition of 1657.

incomprehensible manner. The Papal tenet of transubstantiation had acquired such a hold upon the mind of Luther, through the force of education, that he appears to have been unable to repudiate it entirely ; and hence he adopted, as a sort of compromise, the theory of consubstantiation, which, after all, is equally unscriptural, useless, and self-contradictory. Where is it taught, either by Christ or His apostles, that His body and blood are incorporated *with* the sacramental bread and wine, so as to form one substance with them ? Supposing the tenet to be true, what benefits do the communicants receive from such an amalgamation ? “The flesh profiteth nothing.” (John vi. 63.) It is not by a literal eating of the flesh of Christ, and a drinking of His blood, that men are saved ; but by the exercise of a true and lively faith ; a faith which has respect to His incarnation and sacrificial death.

The doctrine of consubstantiation is thus judiciously stated by Dr. Murdock : “Luther denied transubstantiation, that is, a transmutation of the substance of the bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Christ ; yet held to consubstantiation, that is, a real and corporeal presence of the body and blood of Christ, *in, under, and along with*, the bread and wine ; so that the sacramental substances, after consecration, became each of them twofold ; namely, the bread became both bread and the flesh of Christ, and the wine became both wine and the blood of Christ. Sometimes, however, he represented the union of the two substances in each element as constituting but one substance ; just as the union of the Divine and human natures in Christ constituted but one Person. The ubiquity of Christ’s body was an

obvious consequence of His doctrine ; and one which He did not hesitate to admit.”\*

III. The next error that we will specify is that of the Socinians, who regard the Lord's supper merely as a commemorative ordinance, having reference to Christ simply as a religious Teacher. For, as they discard the doctrine of atonement for sin by the death of the cross, and regard His death only as that of a martyr, they deprive this ordinance of its sacramental and covenant character, and view it only as the commemoration of a death from which they derive advantage in the way of instruction. With them, therefore, the celebration of the Lord's supper can be little more than an act of respect for the memory of a distinguished Teacher, sent by God with miraculous credentials. When treating of the doctrine of the sacraments, we laid down principles deduced from the Holy Scriptures, which furnish a complete refutation of these low and unevangelical views, which are, indeed, as we conceive, rather deistical than Christian in their character and bearing.

IV. Among the errors respecting the supper of the Lord, we must not forget the fearful misapprehension of a large class of people who use this holy ordinance as a substitute for both religion and morality. They live in the love and practice of sin, and yet imagine that by occasionally coming to the Lord's table they obtain a sort of periodical forgiveness before God, so that their eternal interests are secured ; although they are entire strangers to repentance toward God, and faith toward

\* Murdoch's Translation of Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History," vol. iii., p. 121. Edition of 1841. For an able exposure of this absurd dogma see also Campbell's "Lectures on Ecclesiastical History," vol. ii., pp. 354-357. Edition of 1815.

our Lord Jesus Christ, and are therefore destitute of both inward and outward holiness. Persons of this description are usually very anxious to receive the Lord's supper before they die ; just as if the bare receiving of the sacramental elements could exempt them from the punishment of hell, and supply a title to heaven ! It is the duty of ministers to expose these and similar errors, and thus rescue unwary souls out of the snare of the devil. In the absence of sincere penitence and of faith unfeigned, it is in vain for men to hope for salvation, however frequently they may appear at the table of the Lord. The Lord's supper is intended to be a help to personal piety and righteousness, and not a substitute for them.

V. Directly opposite to the error just named is the mistake of those who imagine that some degree of personal merit is requisite to qualify them for an acceptable receiving of the Lord's supper. They read, that "who-soever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord ;" "for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." (1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.) From these words they conclude that if they have no "worthiness" in the sight of God, they not only have no just authority to come to the table of the Lord, but are in danger, if they do come, of incurring the sentence of "damnation."

These people should be taught, that as all those who are weary and heavy laden under the burden of sin are invited to come to Christ as their Saviour, they have an undoubted right to receive the memorials of His cross and passion. The "worthiness" in question is not the worthiness of proper merit, but worthiness in the sense

of being congruous, proper, becoming. It is not becoming that a man who is living in carelessness and sin should join in so holy an ordinance; or that men who, like the Corinthians, indulged themselves in bitter strife, and even in drunkenness at the table of the Lord, should place themselves among devout communicants. The Corinthians who thus offended were punished with temporal judgments, and rendered themselves liable to heavier judgments hereafter. They provoked the Lord to afflict them with diseases, and even death. But no man who is heartily sorry for his sin, and sincerely desirous of being saved from it, should on this account be deterred from coming to the table of the Lord. On the contrary, all such as “do truly and earnestly repent of their sins, and are in love and charity with their neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways,” are authorised to “draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to their comfort;” assured that the Saviour delights to receive such communicants, and to bestow upon them the richest blessings of His infinite and eternal love. To every man that hears the warning and inviting voice of Christ, and then opens the door of his heart, Christ Himself has said, “I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” (Rev.-iii. 20.)



## XIX.—THE CHURCH.

THE next subject that claims our attention is THE CHURCH of Christ ; a subject concerning which much has been written, and great diversity of opinion has prevailed, especially since the period of the Reformation, when the haughty and exclusive claims of the Church of Rome were subjected to a searching scrutiny, and the Holy Scriptures were regarded as the true standard of appeal. Many elaborate treatises on the church, its true nature, constitution, and government, are extant in our own and other languages ; but, losing sight of them, and of all merely human authority, we will endeavour to collect and arrange the substance of what is contained in the oracles of God respecting these points.

I. We advance, as a first proposition, that the Greek term, *ἐκκλησία*, which is usually rendered “ church ” in our Authorised Version, bears various senses in the New Testament. Its general meaning is “ assembly,” but it does not of itself describe the kind of assembly to which it is applied.

1. It is used with respect to a riotous concourse of people. When St. Paul was in Ephesus, preaching the truth, certain craftsmen, who obtained temporal gain by the worship of the goddess Diana, which was practised

there, were filled with alarm, and stirred up the people in general against the apostle and his friends. In the midst of the excitement, "some cried one thing, and some another; for the" ἐκκλησία, "assembly, was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together." (Acts xix. 32.) This was, properly speaking, a mob, or riotous assembly; the people being under no regular and authorised control, and prepared by angry passions for the perpetration of any outrage. To the body of heathen people at Ephesus, thus convened and stimulated, the name of ἐκκλησία, "assembly," or "church," is applied, not only in the text to which we have just referred, but also in the last verse of the same chapter. "When he had thus spoken, he dismissed" τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, "the assembly."

2. The term is also applied to a legal court, such as is authorised to decide the causes of contending parties. The town-clerk of Ephesus, in the midst of the general tumult, interposed, and tranquillized the enraged multitude by a sensible and temperate speech, in which he told them that there were effectual means of redress provided for all the citizens who might be injured, and who had therefore any just ground of complaint, either against St. Paul, or any other person; adding, that questions affecting the interests of the people should "be determined in a lawful" ἐκκλησία, "church," or "assembly." (Verse 39.) Here the term is applied to a regularly-constituted court; a legal assembly being opposed to the confused and riotous multitude who then perambulated the streets of Ephesus, and of which the town-clerk complained as likely to lead to disastrous consequences.

3. The term "church" is used to denote a company

of Christian people, voluntarily joined together for spiritual purposes. It is applied to so small a number as usually met together in a private house, and to the many thousands of converted people who were resident in any particular city or neighbourhood. The following are examples:—"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus." "Likewise greet the church that is in their house." (Rom. xvi. 3, 5.) "Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." (1 Cor. xvi. 19.) "Salute Nymphas, and the church which is in his house." (Col. iv. 15.) "Unto Philemon,.....and to the church in thy house." (Philem. 1, 2.) Respecting the entire body of believers in Jerusalem, after the Pentecost, consisting of some thousands of people, it is said, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts ii. 47.) The same form of expression is used concerning the organized bodies of Christian people in other cities. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth." (1 Cor. i. 2.) "Unto the church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. i. 1.) When the Christians of any particular country are mentioned in the New Testament, they are called "churches," in the plural number, because they were divided into distinct communities, or societies, each of which had its own officers and arrangements. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria." (Acts ix. 31.) "Unto the churches of Galatia." (Gal. i. 2.) "And so ordain I in all churches." (1 Cor. vii. 17.) Every Christian society, therefore, according to the phraseology of the New Testament, is a church of Christ.

It is observable that no person whatever is mentioned in the New Testament as having believed in Christ, so as to realise an interest in the benefits of His mediation, who at the same time stood aloof from church communion. All believers, whether they were Jews or Gentiles by birth, are spoken of as united in holy fellowship, drawn together by the spiritual instinct of Divine love, with which they were inspired by the Holy Ghost. Such, unquestionably, is the order of God, who has provided fraternal intercourse as one important means of religious improvement. In Jerusalem, it is said, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved;" (Acts ii. 47;) thus teaching that the addition to the church of persons who are in the process of salvation is not the work of man, but of the Lord, who is pleased to unite His people to Himself and to each other, according to His own prayer: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." (John xvii. 21.)

4. The term "church" is used to denote the entire body of God's people upon the earth, including the adult members of all particular and local churches, with their infant offspring who have been baptized. In this comprehensive sense the word is to be understood in the following scriptures:—"Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi. 18.) "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii. 10.) "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." (Eph. iii. 21.)—"Christ is the Head of the church."

“The church is subject unto Christ.” “Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph. v. 23–27.) “Ye are come unto.....the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.” (Heb. xii. 22, 23.)

It is observable that the word “church” never occurs in the Authorised Version of the Old Testament; the terms “congregation,” “assembly,” and “convocation” being used instead of it. In the Greek version of the Old Testament by the Seventy, however, the word *ἐκκλησία*, “church,” often occurs; and St. Stephen applies it to the entire tribes of Israel, after their emancipation from Egypt. “This is he, that was in” *τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*, “the church, in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers.” (Acts vii. 38.)

These are the principal senses in which the word “church” is used in the Holy Scriptures; but theological writers have found it convenient to connect with the term various epithets for the purpose of distinction, and of rendering their meaning more definite than it otherwise would be. We, therefore, often read of the church *militant*, and of the church *triumphant*; of the *visible* church, and of the church *invisible*.\* By the

\* “The soul’s faith and covenant consent is the constitutive qualification of a Christian, as a member of the catholic church, as *invisible*, and known only to God: and the profession of the faith and consent to the baptismal covenant is the constitutive qualification of a Christian, or member of the church as *visible*.”—Baxter’s “Answer to Dodwell and Sherlock,” p. 188. Edition of 1682.



“militant church” is meant the body of Christian people upon the earth, contending with their spiritual adversaries, and fighting the good fight of faith; and by the “church triumphant,” the people of God in their glorified state, enjoying the rewards of victory. In accordance with this phraseology we are accustomed to sing,

“The church in her militant state  
Is weary, and cannot forbear ;”

and,

“The church triumphant in Thy love,  
Their mighty joys we know.”

By the “visible church” is meant the entire body of people who profess the Christian religion, whether their profession be sincere or only formal; and by the “invisible church,” the true spiritual people of God, whose hearts are right with Him, and who are accepted in the Beloved. Many of those who are acknowledged in this world as members of the church of God are nevertheless unsanctified, and will be finally excluded from the society of the faithful, with whom they at present mingle. In this world the upright and sincere are only known to God, who reads the heart: so that the distinction between the visible and invisible church is not imaginary, but real; for many have the form of godliness without the power; and God only is able, in every instance, to discriminate between those who merely bear His name and attend His ordinances, and the pious few who offer to Him a spiritual worship.

II. We advance, as a second general proposition, that the people who constitute the church of God upon the earth are designated in Scripture by various appro-

priate names. To a few of the most remarkable of these it may not be improper briefly to advert.

1. The term "church," we have seen, properly signifies an assembly, or congregation; so that by "the church of God" we are to understand the assembly of God, or the congregation of God, as it is opposed to the assembly or the congregation of the wicked one, called "the synagogue of Satan." (Rev. ii. 9; iii. 9.) The members of God's church are separated from the profane world, for objects which are intimately connected with His glory, and the fulfilment of His merciful and holy purposes; and hence they stand in a peculiar relation to Him, and are placed under His immediate influence and government. His care for them is more tender than His care for the rest of mankind, who live in a state of alienation from Him.

2. The church is denominated, by way of eminence, "the called," and "the called of God." "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." (Rom. i. 6, 7.) "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (Rom. viii. 28.) "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." (1 Cor. i. 2.) "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling." (2 Tim. i. 9.) "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." (Heb. iii. 1.)

The Gospel is the call of God, addressed to all mankind; and is at once an invitation and a command: an invitation to the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings, under the name of "a feast of fat things;" and a command to return to Him, so as to serve Him in holiness

and righteousness before Him all the days of their lives. Many disregard the call of God, and perish through their inattention and disobedience; others obey, and live. Those who obey are denominated "the called;" not because they are the only people to whom the call of God has ever been addressed, but because in them the true nature and design of God's call are realised and seen. In respect of the careless and disobedient, who sin and perish, the call of God is as if it had never been given; but in those who obey the call of God the true purpose of that call is accomplished in its fulness of Divine power and mercy.

3. The members of the church are also denominated "the chosen" or "elect of God." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. viii. 33.) "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies." (Col. iii. 12.) "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." (1 Thess. i. 4.) "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (2 Tim. ii. 10.)

Under the Old-Testament dispensation the title of "elect" was given to the entire body of Abraham's descendants through the line of Isaac and of Jacob, because they were chosen by God to be the depositaries of His truth, and to enjoy high religious advantages which were withheld from all other people. Under the Gospel this title is applied to all who believe in Christ, whether they be Jews or Gentiles by birth; and they, in their turn, are also intrusted with the truth and ordinances of God. At the same time, they not only enjoy high religious advantages, but also rich spiritual blessings. Their election, which has respect to their personal

faith, has an ultimate reference to eternal glory : but it is not absolute and irreversible ; for they are charged to “give diligence, that they may make their calling and election sure.” (2 Peter i. 10.) The election of believers takes place according to a purpose which was formed in the mind of God from the days of eternity. In the prospect of the fall and ruin of mankind, Christ “was foreordained before the foundation of the world” as their Redeemer and Saviour ; (1 Peter i. 20 ;) and all that should believe in Him were by God’s free grace and mercy predestinated to the enjoyment of eternal life. “The faithful in Christ” are therefore said to be “chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love,” as preparatory to their final blessedness in heaven. (Eph. i. 1, 4, 5.) As believers in Christ, they are the objects of God’s special favour, and will remain such for ever, “if they hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end.” (Heb. iii. 6, 14.)

4. The members of the church are called God’s “household” and “family.” “Let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.” (Gal. vi. 10.) “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” (Eph. ii. 19.) “I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” (Eph. iii. 14, 15.)

Of this great and happy family God is the Father ; the Lord Jesus is the elder Brother ; believers are all His brethren, and brethren of one another. A family is expected to be characterized by order, tender affection,

and unity ; to be the abode of peace, of mutual confidence and sympathy, in contrast to general society, where people are often strangers to each other, and where the endearments of home are neither expected nor enjoyed. The apostle states that a part of this family are in heaven, and a part upon the earth ; yet they are all one, being united under the same Head, and bearing one character, that of holy love : a thought which is beautifully expressed in the well-known stanza :—

“ One family we dwell in Him,  
 One church above, beneath,  
 Though now divided by the stream,  
 The narrow stream of death.”

5. The members of the church are called “a peculiar people,” and “the people of God.” We connect these titles together, because we conceive that their import is substantially the same. “Who gave Himself for us, that He might.....purify unto Himself a peculiar people.” (Titus ii. 14.) The meaning is, a people that should be eminently and specially His own, and regarded by Him as such. “Ye are.....a peculiar people.” (1 Peter ii. 9.) The literal rendering of this text is, “A people of *acquirement* to Himself.” St. Paul uses a similar expression in Eph. i. 14, where he calls the church “the purchased possession,” *περιποιήσεως* : that which the Lord Jesus, by the shedding of His blood upon the cross, hath acquired to be peculiarly His own, a special treasure to Himself, the people being “bought with a price.” “I will call them My people, which were not My people.” (Rom. ix. 25.) “God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew.” (Rom. xi. 2.) “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”



(Heb. iv. 9.) "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." (Heb. viii. 10.)

It is of the people who stand in this near relation to God that St. John speaks when he says, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world," who are not in this relation, "lieth in wickedness;" or, "in the wicked one," as the passage is generally understood. (1 John v. 19.) Hence the happiness and safety of real Christians, especially when viewed in contrast to the misery and danger of the rest of mankind. The church and the world divide the human race. God's people are they who accept the invitations of the Gospel, so as to receive its blessings, and yield themselves up to Him as the servants of His will.

6. The church is called "the temple" and "the building of God." "Ye are God's building." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. iii. 9, 16, 17.) "And ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 20-22.) "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." (1 Peter ii. 5.)

The building to which allusion is made in all these texts is doubtless the temple at Jerusalem, which, we have reason to believe, was the most perfect specimen of architectural beauty the world has ever seen. We infer this not merely from the vast amount of treasure and

labour that was expended upon it ; but from the fact that the artisans who superintended the erection, and prepared its ornaments, were inspired by God with supernatural skill for the purpose. It is said that "the palace was not for man, but for the Lord God." (1 Chron. xxix. 1.) In like manner the church is the habitation of God. Here He dwells, in the fulness of His power and love, while the holiness and the spiritual enjoyments of His people demonstrate His presence, agency, and favour. Every stone is fitted for its place, both for use and ornament, and the house is filled with the glory of God.

7. The church is called "the body of Christ." "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Cor. xii. 13, 27.) "And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body." (Eph. i. 22, 23.) "Let no man beguile you of your reward,.....not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, increaseth with the increase of God." (Col. ii. 18, 19.)

The human body, considered in the adaptation of its several parts to each other, is one of the most exquisite productions of the Divine wisdom, especially when viewed in connexion with the intelligent and immortal mind by which it is actuated. To the frame, thus "fearfully and wonderfully made," the church is compared. All the sanctified believers of whom it is composed are adapted to each other with as perfect a wisdom and fitness as are the several members of the human body : and when this body of Christ is animated

and directed by Him, as its Head and life-giving Spirit, it not only advances to the completion of its stature, but is at unity with itself, and all its actions are worthy of Him whose name it bears.

8. The church is denominated "the bride" and "spouse" of Christ. "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." (2 Cor. xi. 2.) "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (Rev. xix. 7, 8.) "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. xxi. 2.)

There is no relation subsisting among mankind that is so tender and sacred as that of marriage; and hence it is often referred to by the inspired writers to illustrate the relation that subsists between Christ and His church. The unfaithfulness of married persons to each other has always been regarded as one of the foulest crimes, and has often been punished with death in its most terrific forms. Idolatry is spoken of in Holy Scripture as spiritual fornication; and with this crime the city that sitteth upon the seven hills, the mystic Babylon, the Church of Rome, stands charged in the Apocalypse. She calls herself not only the spouse of Christ, but His only spouse, to the exclusion of all other bodies of Christian people; but "upon her forehead is a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." (Rev. xvii. 5.) The true spouse of Christ is faithful to her Lord, choosing rather to die than to corrupt His truth and

ordinances by idolatry and superstition. The Papal community is a most notorious and daring corrupter of both. It is only in a very qualified sense that she can be regarded as belonging to the church of God. She is the patron of the great apostasy, and His people are commanded to "come out of her." (Rev. xviii. 4.)

9. The church is called "the flock of Christ and of God." The evangelical prophet, describing the conduct of our Saviour with regard to His people, says, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd;" (Isai. xl. 11;) and He has Himself said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life." (John x. 27, 28.) "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God." "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." (Acts xx. 28, 29.) "Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (1 Peter ii. 25.) "Feed the flock of God." (1 Peter v. 2.)

The sheep is well known to be remarkable for its harmlessness, inflicting no injury upon any of the animal tribes, and for its uncomplaining patience in suffering. In these respects it is a just symbol of the true followers of Christ, who possess His mind, and are charged by Him to love even their enemies, and to do good to all men. As the sheep need the constant care of the shepherd, especially in countries which are infested with beasts of prey; so do the people of Christ, in this world of temptation and sin, need His uninterrupted guardianship, in order to their preservation from spiritual harm.

10. The church is called "a nation of royal priests."  
"Ye are.....a royal priesthood, an holy nation."  
(1 Peter ii. 9.)

We conceive of a nation as a body of people united under one sovereign, governed by the same laws, and enjoying the same immunities: and such is the church of God. Christ is its King; believers are His subjects, who obey His laws, and are protected by His power.

The Jewish priests, to whom reference is here made, were especially employed in offering sacrifices to God. The true calling of all who belong to the church of God is to present to Him, and that continually, "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable through Jesus Christ."

As the Lord Jesus combines in Himself the kingly and priestly offices, so the people who bear His name are kings as well as priests. They have power over the world, and Satan, and sin; a kingdom is prepared for them; and they are destined to reign for ever with their glorified Lord. Hence the peculiarity of their song of praise: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."  
(Rev. i. 5, 6.)

11. The church is called "God's husbandry."  
(1 Cor. iii. 9.) It is "a field which the Lord hath blessed." His ministers are the husbandmen, to whom the guardianship and cultivation of it are committed. Some of them are employed in sowing "precious seed," others in planting, and others again in watering what is planted; and the labours of all are directed to the one object of producing the fruits of righteousness to the glory and praise of God. With respect to himself and



one of his fellow-labourers, St. Paul has said, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 6.) The cultivators of this sacred enclosure should endeavour to make, as much as possible, a second garden of Eden, upon which there was no blight, but every tree and shrub and flower appeared in a form of perfect beauty.

These are the most prominent titles which are given to the church in the Holy Scriptures ; and they all serve to show the nearness of the church's relation to God and to Christ, the sacredness of the responsibilities under which every member of the church is laid, and the holy wisdom and fidelity which ministers need, seeing that to them the care of the church is confided.

III. We advance, as a third general proposition, that the church of God, although composed of many distinct communities, or separate churches, is eminently one.

This is indeed implied in the various terms by which it is designated by the Holy Ghost.

The church is "the body of Christ." A body is one, distinct and complete in itself, although it consists of many members and organs, each of which has its separate and peculiar office.

The church is "the family of God." A family may comprise many persons, whose duties vary ; yet, as a family, it is one, and no more.

The church is "the temple of God," considered in the sense of a building ; and in this respect it is one. It rests upon one foundation, and is dedicated to the one true and living God. Many stones are comprised in it ; and these are hewn into various shapes, they occupy various positions, and they serve various purposes ; but the building itself is one and indivisible.

The church is "a holy nation," and, as such, it is one; being governed by the same laws, and subject to one Sovereign, though comprising many distinct tribes and families.

The doctrine of the church's unity has been greatly abused by intolerant men, who have assumed that they and their party are *THE* church, and have reproached all who differ from them as schismatics, who have no claim to the Christian character, no place in the church of God, and no just hope of heaven. Such is the haughty and exclusive language of the Romanists; and it is repeated with no less pertinacity and bitterness by many persons belonging to the Established Church of this country, who condemn all Nonconformists as strongly as the Church of Rome condemns all Protestant communities. Let us, then, inquire how the Scriptures speak of the church's unity, and whether they justify the various bodies of Christian people in thus regarding one another "as heathen men and publicans."

Perhaps the completest view that is given of the unity of the church, in the same compass, is that which St. Paul has given in Ephes. iv. 3-6: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Let us analyse the text, and survey the several particulars that it contains.

1. It teaches that the church is one with respect to the Object of its worship. "There is one God and Father of all." God is essentially one, and the exclusive object of religious homage; for He only is the Creator and Preserver of all, and the Fountain of all good. He

is "above all" created beings, however exalted, disposing of them "according to the counsel of His own will;" He is "through all" things, pervading all nature; and He is "in all" the true members of His church, exerting in them a gracious power, which sanctifies them, and makes them permanently happy. The church is practically observant of the great command, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

2. The church has "one Lord," and only one. Christ is the Lord of all, having died and risen again, that He might be the Lord both of the living and the dead. (Rom. xiv. 9.) As the wife is subject to her husband, so is the church subject to Christ. His will is her law; nor is she ever at liberty to acknowledge any authority in opposition to His commands and decisions. She is to resist, even unto death, all attempts to bring in "another Gospel," and to substitute for His ordinances "the doctrines and commandments of men."

3. The church has "one Spirit," the Holy Ghost, who spoke by the prophets and apostles, and still speaks in the Scriptures, which were written by His inspiration. The Holy Spirit is the gift of God to men through our Lord Jesus Christ, and will remain in the church till the end of time as the Comforter and the Sanctifier of its members, the author of all ministerial gifts and grace, "the Lord and Giver of life."

4. The church has "one baptism," that of water, an ordinance which the Lord Jesus instituted; which is administered in the name of the Holy Trinity, as a covenant transaction, the sacrament of admission into the holy fraternity of believers, a sign of spiritual blessings, and a seal of God's faithfulness and love, and of our professed fidelity to Him.

5. The church has "one faith;" and this is faith in Christ as the gift of God's infinite and eternal love to men, the propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and the Saviour of all that believe. By this faith men as individuals are justified and sanctified. By this faith they "live" and "walk." The vitality and power of this faith are manifested by obedience; and "by works is faith made perfect."

6. The church has "one hope;" and that is the hope of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. It comprehends the happiness of the disembodied state, the resurrection of the body, glorious and immortal, and the everlasting enjoyment of God in glory. It is a hope that rests upon the faithful promise of God, and is peculiar to those who, being justified and sanctified, are made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

In these respects the church is one, holding these great and essential truths of the Gospel, the principles of all vital godliness. For the church, we must ever remember, is strictly a religious community, not combined for political or secular purposes, but for objects purely spiritual. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world." (John xviii. 36.)

Here, then, we have one important view of the church's unity. It is a unity founded upon the belief and practical acknowledgment of the great truths of the Gospel; such as the unity of God, in opposition to all polytheism; the one mediation of Christ, comprehending His atonement, intercession, and government; the personality and influence of the Holy Ghost; the perpetuity of Christian ordinances; the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. The belief of the truth is

essential to subjective Christianity ; and in that belief the true members of the church are united.

But the unity of the church, as it is described in the New Testament, comprehends more than this : it comprehends especially the unity of holy love ; and hence, in the passage which has just been cited, it is called “the unity of the Spirit.” It is a unity which the Holy Ghost creates, and which can therefore be neither realised nor understood by those who are strangers to the Holy Spirit’s influence. The men who love God, and who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, love one another in the Lord, and for the Lord’s sake ; and the love by which they are actuated is not a natural, but a Divine affection, such as the Holy Ghost inspires. The tenderest of human friendships are but a shadow of “the unity of the Spirit,” the true communion of saints. It is an indescribable oneness of mind and heart ; a yearning affection for each other in the bowels of Jesus Christ ; a mutual sympathy in the joys and sorrows of life ; and an earnest desire to meet in their state of consummate blessedness in heaven, to which all their wishes tend. “And the multitude of them that believed were of ONE HEART, and of ONE SOUL.” (Acts iv. 32.) This is the true unity of the church ; and it has seldom been more beautifully and strongly expressed than by the poet of Methodism :—

“Subsists as in us all one soul ;  
No power can make us twain ;  
And mountains rise, and oceans roll,  
To sever us in vain.”

“O how good and how happy will it be for pastors and people to live in love and unity ! It will not only mind us of Aaron’s perfume, but of the Spirit of love



that dwelt in our Redeemer, and which He promised should be His seal and mark upon all His true disciples ; yea, of the celestial society, and life of perfect love.”\*

Of the great importance of this “unity of the Spirit”—the unity of holy love—we may learn something from the fact, that it was a subject of prayer with our blessed Saviour at the most solemn period of His life. Just before He went to the garden of Gethsemane, and entered into His tremendous agony, He “lifted up His eyes to heaven ;” and among other petitions of unexampled impressiveness and sublimity, to which He then gave utterance, He prayed for the spiritual unity of His apostles, and of all that should be induced to believe in Him through their ministry : “That they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.” “That they may be one, even as We are one : I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me.” (John xvii. 21–23.) We perceive, then, that the true unity of the church is very different from that casual and external unity which results from the bringing of any given number of men to join statedly in the same modes of religious worship. There may be “a form of godliness without the power ;” and there may be an outward uniformity in the entire absence of spiritual worship. In this case, whatever men may profess, and however loud may be their clamours against schism and schismatics, there is no true unity of the church, and no “communion of saints ;” for there is no “fellowship in the Spirit,” and no “unity of the Spirit.”

It may be further observed, that the unity of the

\* Baxter.

church,—the unity of holy love,—for which our Saviour prayed, is a unity that shall never end. It is begun, indeed, upon earth, but it is to be renewed and for ever perfected in heaven. For the purpose of God, in the whole of our Redeemer's mediatorial undertaking, is, that He "might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." (Eph. i. 10.) Christ "having made peace through the blood of the cross," it pleases the Father "by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Col. i. 20.) As Christ, by the sacrifice of His death, reconciled men to God, He reconciled men to the holy angels; so that sanctified believers of every age and nation, with all the various orders of angelic beings, will form one immense and happy brotherhood for ever, loving one another with an ardent and undying affection. God is love; and by love will He bind angels and men to one another, and to Himself through all eternity.

In order to the formation and the maintenance of that true spiritual unity of the church, of which we speak, neither an exact uniformity of opinion, nor of external regimen, is necessary, however desirable they may be regarded. If the Lord Jesus intended that there should be such a uniformity among His people to the end of time, He would doubtless have given the exact model to which all were required to conform. He has not done this; and therefore His followers are allowed a just liberty in things which He has left indifferent. Even in the apostolic churches considerable diversities prevailed. Many of the believing Jews, for instance, refused to join with the believing Gentiles even in the

worship of God, unless those Gentiles would submit to the rite of circumcision, which St. Paul peremptorily forbade. Had there been, therefore, any considerable number of converted heathens in Jerusalem, they must of necessity have had a place of worship separate from that in which the Christian Jews assembled. Indeed, Grotius and Dr. Hammond have recorded their judgment that there were distinct and separate Christian churches, consisting respectively of believing Jews and believing Gentiles, organized and governed by apostles, in Jerusalem, in Antioch, in Rome, and in "many places" besides.\* And why, in the present day, may not Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Methodists, attend their own sanctuaries, listen to the doctrinal tenets which they conscientiously believe to be the truth, and practise their own forms of worship, in the spirit of mutual forbearance, esteem, and affection? Why should Ephraim envy Judah? or Judah vex Ephraim? While the Lord bears with them all, why should they not bear with one another? and by what authority can Christians of any particular denomination claim to be the church, to the exclusion of every other? It is evident, from Rom. xiv., that the Christians who were converted and governed by the apostles held a diversity of opinions respecting the religious observance of particular days, and the lawfulness of particular kinds of food: St. Paul could have easily decided the questions at issue, and have enjoined an exact uniformity of sentiment and practice; but he was not at liberty to do it. The things were in themselves matters of indifference, making the people neither better nor worse; and he had no commission from Christ to interfere, so as to

\* Hammond on Rev. xi. 3.

compel an exact uniformity. Yet in the name of his Lord he charged every one to be fully persuaded in his own mind as to the litigated questions, and to allow the same liberty of thought and action to others, which he claimed for himself.\*

Had this equitable principle been always acted upon, ten thousand scandals, arising from the bitter quarrels of professed Christians, would have been happily prevented. The history of the church supplies undeniable evidence that men may differ in their views of ecclesiastical government, of the metaphysics of theology, of liturgical and extemporary worship, and yet bear all the characteristic marks of New-Testament Christianity. They worship the same God, through the one Mediator; they exercise the same faith in the great Sacrifice which was offered to God for the sins of the world; they are comforted, quickened, and sanctified by the same Spirit; they manifest the same holy and heavenly tempers; and they are animated and cheered by the same hope of eternal life. Agreeing, then, as they do, in the great essentials of Christian verity, why should they not realise the unity of heavenly love? It is enjoined upon them by apostolic precept, and by the command of their gracious Saviour; and they cannot neglect it, but at the hazard of their salvation. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John xiii. 35.) It appears, then, that the true unity of the church consists in holding the TRUTH in LOVE. In accordance with this principle, when St. Paul charged the Corinthians, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they should all speak the same thing, and be perfectly joined together in the same

\* See Note AA, at the end of the volume.

mind and in the same judgment ; (1 Cor. i. 10 ;) he did not refer to every subject, even of religion, to which their attention might be directed, but to their absurd partiality with respect to their religious teachers,—admiring one and despising the rest,—instead of acknowledging their diversified qualifications as the gifts of Christ, endeavouring to derive benefit from the whole, and reserving their supreme admiration and confidence for Christ Himself. In these respects it was not only practicable, but their duty, to think alike.

IV. We advance, as a fourth proposition, that the view which is given in Holy Scripture of the ecclesiastical sins, heresy and schism, is very different from the view that is usually given of them by intolerant partisans.

Schism is usually explained as a separation from the true church ; so that the man who is said to be in schism is assumed to be not in the church of God at all. Heresy is said to be an error in respect of some fundamental doctrine of Christianity. But these are not the senses in which the terms “ heresy ” and “ schism ” are used in the New Testament.

The word “ schism ” literally signifies “ a rent ; ” and when it is applied to Christians, it denotes an alienation of affection. It supposes that the parties to whom it is applied were once united together in holy love ; but that they are thus united no more ; their love having waxed cold, being superseded by unkindness and anger, with their attendant fruits, evil-speaking and strife. It is in this sense that St. Paul charges schism upon the Christians at Corinth ; for the men who were guilty of this sin had not renounced their church-relation to their brethren with whom they were at variance. There were among them “ envy, and strife, and schisms ; ”



one saying, "I am of Paul;" another, "I am of Apollos;" and another, "I am of Cephas;" (1 Cor. i. 10-15; iii. 3-5;) yet were they still accustomed to meet "in the church," and "in one place." (1 Cor. xi. 18-22.) It is clear, therefore, that there may be schism without separation. The Holy Spirit charges the Corinthians with schism, yet their church-relation was not dissolved.

From other passages of Holy Scripture it is equally clear that there may be separation without schism, considered as a sin in the separating party. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (2 Thess. iii. 6.) Withdrawal from the society of an ungodly professor of Christianity is here enjoined as a solemn and imperative duty, charged upon the consciences of Christians by an inspired apostle, and that in the name of the Lord Jesus. And if this is a duty with regard to one wicked professor of religion, it is no less a duty with regard to several such characters, should they even form a majority in the church to which they belong, and should even the minister himself be at the head of them. For there have been many such ministers in the church; and to withdraw from them cannot be less a duty than to withdraw from a wicked man who merely occupies a private station in a Christian community.

It sometimes happened that the great body of the Jewish people, including the priests, apostatized from God, and became idolaters, practising their heathen abominations even in His temple. In these cases it was unquestionably the duty of the pious few to separate

themselves from the corrupt mass. The seven thousand men, in the time of Elijah, who had not bowed the knee to Baal, were but a small minority amidst the revolting multitudes by whom they were surrounded. They were separatists, but not schismatics, considered as offenders against the law of God; for their separation is mentioned as a signal manifestation of God's mercy to them, and of His regard for His own glory. (1 Kings xix. 18.) In the Apocalypse a corrupt community is described, the characteristics of which apply exactly to the Church of Rome. St. John says, as we have seen, "I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. xviii. 4.) It is therefore undeniable that separations even among religious people do not necessarily imply blame. They must be judged of by the circumstances connected with them; for in some cases they are matter of imperative duty, enjoined even by "a voice from heaven."

The following observations on schism form a part of a valuable disquisition by Dr. George Campbell, one of the most acute and accurate writers of modern times:—"It invariably presupposes that among those things whereof it is affirmed there subsisted an union formerly, and as invariably denotes that the union subsists no longer. In this manner the apostle Paul uses the word, applying it to a particular church or congregation. Thus he adjures the Corinthians by the name of the Lord Jesus, that there be no divisions or schisms among them, 1 Cor. i. 10; and in another place of the same Epistle, 1 Cor. xi. 18, he tells them, 'I hear that there are divisions,' or 'schisms,' 'among you.' In order to obtain a proper idea of what is meant by a

breach or schism in this application, we must form a just notion of that which constituted the union whereof schism was a violation. Now the great and powerful cement which united the souls of Christians was their mutual love. Their ‘ hearts,’ in the emphatical language of Holy Writ, were ‘ knit together in love.’ (Col. ii. 2.) This had been declared by their Master to be the distinguishing badge of their profession. ‘ By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love to one another.’ (John xiii. 35.) Their partaking of the same baptism, their professing the same faith, their enjoying the same promises, and their joining in the same religious service, formed a connexion merely external, and of little significance, unless, agreeably to the apostle’s expression, it was rooted and grounded in love. (Eph. iii. 17.) As this, therefore, is the great criterion of the Christian character, and the foundation of Christian unity, whatever alienates the affections of Christians from one another is manifestly subversive of both, and may, consequently, with the greatest truth and energy, be denominated ‘ schism.’ It is not so much what makes an outward distinction, or separation, (though this also may in a lower degree be so denominated,) as what produces an alienation of the heart, which constitutes schism in the sense of the apostle; for this strikes directly at the vitals of Christianity. Indeed, both the evil and the danger of the former, that is, an external separation, is principally to be estimated from its influence upon the latter; that is, in producing an alienation of heart: for it is in the union of affection among Christians, that the spirit, the life, and the power of religion are principally placed.” \*

\* “ Preliminary Dissertations,” diss. ix., part 3.

These remarks may suffice for the purpose of showing the true nature of schism, as that sin is spoken of in Holy Scripture. It is the absence of brotherly love among Christian people; a harsh and censorious spirit; which manifests itself in pride, rash judging, and contention. It is therefore easy to perceive that the charge of schism does not lie at the door of the men of peace and love, to whatever denomination they may belong; whether they be Churchmen or Nonconformists; and that the most notorious schismatics are the intolerant revilers of every party, who cannot bear that any one should take the liberty of differing from them. The true antidote to schism is the charity of which St. Paul has given so comprehensive and beautiful a description, 1 Cor. xiii.\*

With respect to the term "heresy," which persons professing Christianity have for ages used as a term of reproach against one another, it literally signifies a *choice*; and is employed by the sacred writers to denote a sect, or party, with which men choose to connect themselves: so that the word does not of itself imply either praise or blame. The sect that is chosen may be good, or it may not. It may be chosen and maintained in a blameless manner, or it may be an occasion of much evil. The Greek term *αἵρεσις* occurs nine times in the New Testament; and in only three instances is it used to denote that which is matter of blame. The Pharisees and Sadducees differed from each other; and hence they are both called "heresies," or "sects," by the author of the Acts of the Apostles, although they both united in the national worship of the Jews. The Christians differed from the Jews in general, and still

\* See Note BB, at the end of the volume.

more from the heathen ; and therefore, on the arrival of St. Paul at Rome, the Jews who were resident there said to him, in reference to the Christians, “ We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest : for as concerning this sect,”—*αἵρέσεως ταύτης*, literally “ this heresy,”—“ we know that everywhere it is spoken against.” (Acts xxviii. 22.) The word is not here used in a bad sense ; for these men confessed that they did not understand the true nature of Christianity, and therefore wished to elicit the judgment of the apostle respecting it.

St. Paul uses the word in a good sense in Acts xxvi. 5, where he says, when defending his character before Festus and Agrippa, “ After the most straitest sect of our religion ”—*αἵρεσιν*, the straitest “ heresy ” of our religion—“ I lived a Pharisee.” He could not mean that he had been an abettor of false doctrine, but that he had belonged to that sect of the Jewish church which, above all others, was noted for the strict observance of religious duties.

Differences of opinion among men, however, often lead to angry contention ; and hence St. Paul appears to have used the word “ heresy ” in this unfavourable sense 1 Cor. xi. 19, and Gal. v. 20. “ There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” “ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are.....variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies.” St. Peter is understood to have used the word in the same sense where he says, “ There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.” (2 Peter ii. 1.) Mr. Wesley’s note upon this text is, “ They first,” (the false teachers,) “ by denying the Lord, introduced destructive heresies, that



is, divisions ; or they occasioned first these divisions, and then were given up to a reprobate mind, even to deny the Lord that bought them. Either the heresies are the effect of denying the Lord, or the denying the Lord was the consequence of the heresies."

The only place in the New Testament where a heretic is mentioned, is Titus iii. 10, 11, where the apostle says, "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject ; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Mr. Wesley's note here is, "This is the only place in the whole Scripture where this word 'heretic' occurs ; and here it evidently means a man that obstinately persists in contending about 'foolish questions,' and thereby occasions strife and animosities, schisms and parties, in the church. This, and this alone, is an 'heretic' in the Scripture sense ; and his punishment is here fixed :—Shun, avoid him ; leave him to himself. As for the Popish sense, 'a man that errs in fundamentals,' although it crept, with many other things, early into the church, yet it has no shadow of foundation either in the Old or New Testament."

We will conclude this disquisition on schism and heresy with Mr. Wesley's invaluable note on 1 Cor. xi. 18, 19. He says, "It is plain that by 'schisms' is not meant any separation from the church, but uncharitable divisions in it ; for the Corinthians continued to be one church ; and, notwithstanding all their strife and contention, there was no separation of any one party from the rest, with regard to external communion. And it is in the same sense that the word is used 1 Cor. i. 10 ; xii. 25 ; which are the only places in the New Testament, beside this, where church schisms are mentioned.

Therefore the indulging any temper contrary to this tender care of each other is the true scriptural schism. This is, therefore, a quite different thing from that orderly separation from corrupt churches which later ages have stigmatized as schism; and have made a pretence for the vilest cruelties, oppressions, and murders that have troubled the Christian world. Both heresies and schisms are here mentioned in very near the same sense; unless by 'schisms' be meant, rather, those inward animosities which occasion heresies; that is, outward divisions or parties: so that whilst one said, 'I am of Paul,' another, 'I am of Apollos,' this implied both schism and heresy. So wonderfully have later ages distorted the words *heresy* and *schism* from their scriptural meaning! Heresy is not, in all the Bible, taken for an error in fundamentals, or in anything else; nor schism, for any separation made from the outward communion of others. Therefore, both heresy and schism, in the modern sense of the words, are sins that the Scripture knows nothing of; but were invented merely to deprive mankind of the benefit of private judgment, and liberty of conscience."

## XX.—THE CHURCH.

V. WE advance, as a fifth proposition, that the absolute purity of the church upon the earth is not to be expected ; yet that a marked difference should be preserved between the church and the world.

In the Apostles' Creed, the church is not only called catholic, but " holy ;" and Mr. Wesley has observed, in one of his sermons, that various reasons have been assigned for the application to it of this epithet : one writer having said that the church is called " holy " because Christ, the Head of it, is holy ; another, because its ordinances are intended to promote holiness ; and a third, because it is the Lord's will that His church should be holy. We would rather say, with that venerable man, that the church is called " holy " because it is holy : for in the absence of holiness, properly speaking, there is no church ; an apostle having declared that " if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His ;" (Rom. viii. 9 ;) and where the Spirit of Christ is, there is holiness, the direct effect of His presence and operation.

Yet the members of the true church are holy in different degrees ; some of them being eminent examples of holiness, and others of them exhibiting only an imperfect sanctification of their nature : and there

have always been connected with the church persons who were not really sanctified at all, being satisfied with a mere form of godliness, and possessing nothing more than a relative holiness ; like that of the ancient Jews, who had received the sacrament of circumcision, but were circumcised neither in heart nor ear.

Various reasons may be assigned for this state of things. In too many instances the children who are admitted into the church by baptism are left without Christian instruction and discipline, and therefore grow up in ignorance and sin, their parents and guardians who presented them to God in that holy sacrament being criminally forgetful of their vows ; and even children who are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and who, at one time, give promise of a life of piety, as they advance in years, sometimes fall into various temptations, and disappoint the hopes of the church, in whose registers their names are enrolled.

In some cases, also, adult persons enter into the church without any deep conviction of the reality and importance of religion, and perhaps from worldly motives. Ananias and Sapphira made an attempt of this kind, but were detected before their purpose was fully accomplished. The fraud, however, which they attempted to practise upon the church was only discovered by means of inspiration ; and as that has long since been withdrawn, it is no matter of surprise that such characters as Ananias and Sapphira are not unfrequently found in connexion with the faithful servants of Christ ; “for neither man nor angel can discern hypocrisy.”

At the same time it is to be observed, that the best of men are not immutable. Adam, although created in

the image of God, and bound to obedience by the strongest ties, fell into sin; and much more, therefore, may we expect that men in whose nature there is an evil bias, and who are surrounded by temptations, will occasionally fall into sin, even "after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Peter ii. 20.)

In the purest churches, therefore, we must expect to find a mixture of good and evil. Of this, indeed, our blessed Lord hath warned us, and given us to understand that the unsanctified will only be finally removed from the church in the great day of account. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xiii. 47-50.) The Gospel, when preached with fidelity and zeal, so impresses mankind, that many so far comply with its requirements as to connect themselves with the church, and assume a religious profession, while they do not in heart turn to God. The complete separation of these people from them that are sanctified will only take place in the day of the Lord. Till then the Gospel net will continue to collect together the good and the bad. In the meanwhile, however, there are overt acts of evil into which these formalists and backsliders not unfrequently fall; and these call for the exercise of Christian discipline; for "some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment." (1 Tim. v. 24.) Those churches are



unfaithful to Christ and His cause who wink at false doctrine, and tolerate acts of impiety : and for delinquencies of this kind every church is bound to prepare. "Then said Jesus unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come : but woe unto him through whom they come !" (Luke xvii. 1.) "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. xi. 19.)

Sometimes the solemn and official administration of reproof will meet the case of the unfaithful. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." (1 Tim. v. 20.) But when the professed members of the church indulge themselves in unchristian conduct, and will not receive admonition so as to profit by it ; and especially when they fall into such sins as are matter of public scandal, and induce the enemies of the truth to blaspheme ; it becomes the painful duty of Christ's ministers, who have the pastoral charge of the flock, in the name of the Lord, and in behalf of the church, to pass upon them the sentence of excommunication, cutting them off from church-fellowship, and especially from the table of the Lord. The following texts of holy Scripture bear directly upon this subject :—"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone : if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." (Matt. xviii. 15-17.) "A man that is an heretic, after

the first and second admonition, reject ; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." (Titus iii. 10, 11.) "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (2 Thess. iii. 6.) True excommunication is in itself a heavy punishment, and is the more likely to produce its legitimate design when it is unconnected with civil pains and penalties.

In cases of this nature private admonition and reproof are to be first tried, and that repeatedly. When these fail to produce any salutary and lasting effect, excommunication is to follow, but not till then ; for men are never to be lightly severed from the church of God, into which many who are thus severed will probably never enter again. "The heart of an honest judge," says Baxter, "will be turned in him before he pass the sentence of death on an offender : and before we pass the sentence of excommunication, our bowels must yearn over poor souls, and all means be tried to recover them." But when the sin is great and notorious, as in the case of the Corinthian, who had committed incest, the sentence of excommunication should be at once pronounced and carried into effect. "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife." "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the

Lord Jesus." "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. v. 1, 4, 5, 13.)

The objects of excommunication are various. Among these we may specify,

1. The repentance and ultimate salvation of the offender. He is to be thus taught that "sin is exceeding sinful;" that it acquires a tenfold aggravation when it is committed by a person who professes the holy religion of Christ; that those who live in it are unfit for the church on earth, and much more for the society of the blessed in heaven: that under these impressions he may be filled with alarm, humble himself before God, presenting to the church and to the world the fruits of genuine penitence: in this manner doing what he can to remedy the injury that he has done to the cause of Christ, and to regain the forfeited joys of salvation. The practice of the ancient church in excluding open offenders from Christian communion was highly commendable; but the denial to these unhappy people of the privilege of attending the public worship of God, and of hearing His word preached, was utterly indefensible: for Christians are still bound to do what they can to restore a fallen brother, so that he may not perish for ever. The true Christian discipline lies between the extremes of sinful lenity, and a severity which drives men to despair.

2. The excommunication of an offending member of the church is intended to serve as a warning to others. All Christians in this world are liable to temptation, and need therefore to be continually reminded of the necessity of watchfulness and prayer. Open sin is not to be passed over, but visited with open reproof, that others may fear; and much more is excommunication intended

to produce this effect. Even the most devout and circumspect have need to be stimulated to greater vigilance and circumspection ; the negligent and lukewarm, who have already begun to parley with temptation, have need to be awakened out of their delusive dream ; and these ends are likely to be answered when the sin of an offending brother is brought to light, and he is in shame and guilt cut off from that connexion with the people of God which it had been his privilege to enjoy. "Great fear came upon all the church" in Jerusalem, when the sin of Ananias and Sapphira was detected, and openly punished. (Acts v. 11.)

3. The preservation of the purity of the church is another object of excommunication. It is in the nature of evil to spread like a gangrene. When error and sin are tolerated in the church, they are seldom long confined to a few individuals. The evil diffuses itself ; many catch the infection ; and the church becomes powerless for good ; for, with the loss of character, it loses its power to benefit the world. Faithless Christians "walk naked," and others "see their shame." Instead of shedding upon the world the clear and unsullied light of truth and holiness, the church exhibits a lurid glare, from which those that are without receive injury rather than spiritual advantage. With respect to the Corinthian who had been guilty of incest, St. Paul said to the church of which the offender was a member, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened." (1 Cor. v. 6, 7.) \*

4. Excommunication is particularly intended to

\* See Note CC, at the end of the volume.

guard the honour and the usefulness of the church. Christianity is eminently a holy religion, and is intended to make all mankind holy. The church of God is to exhibit in practice the holiness for which the Gospel provides ; and, at the same time, it is to disseminate the Gospel, as the instrument by which it pleases God to sanctify men to Himself ; commanding in this manner the respect of the world, and bringing all people under Christian influence. But when the church herself tolerates error and sin, the truth loses its power, and the name of Christ is openly dishonoured. On the other hand, by the purity of the church the doctrine of God our Saviour is adorned, the ignorance of foolish men is put to silence, and the world is made to feel the salutary power of the Gospel. The faithless men who countenance evil in the church, or who even connive at it, make themselves responsible for its consequences, and bring the guilt of it upon their own heads. The angel of the church at Pergamos, and the angel of the church at Thyatira, are both censured by our Saviour for tolerating teachers of error, and tenets which led to unholy practice ; the angel of the church at Ephesus is commended by the same authority, because he “ could not bear them that were evil ; ” and St. Paul charges Timothy, in regulating the affairs of the Ephesian church, to beware of making himself a partaker of the sins of other men. (Rev. ii. 2, 14, 15, 20 ; 1 Tim. v. 22.)

We perceive, then, that those churches which are destitute of discipline, so as to give the sacraments of Christ to open sinners, are unfaithful to the Lord Jesus, to His people, and to His cause. While all possible compassion is shown to individuals who have been overcome in the hour of temptation, the honour of Christ



and of His Gospel ought never to be compromised by the toleration of sin in the church. Till the end of time it will be the duty of Christ's people to withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not according to apostolic teaching. (2 Thess. iii. 6.)

VI. We advance, as a sixth general proposition, that the duties which are incumbent upon the members of the church are numerous and highly important. At a few of these we will briefly glance.

1. The members of the church ought to be blameless and upright in their whole deportment. It should be their concern not only to discharge with fidelity and zeal all the duties of religion, but strictly to fulfil every moral obligation, so as in every respect to have a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward men. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. v. 14, 16.)

2. A peaceable spirit and demeanour are especially incumbent upon the members of Christ's church. Nothing can be more alien from the entire system of Christianity than a pugnacious and quarrelsome disposition. The God whom Christians worship calls Himself "the God of peace;" Christ came "preaching peace;" the doctrine which the apostles taught, and by which the world is to be saved, is called "the Gospel of peace;" and "peace-makers" are pronounced "blessed," and declared to be "the children of God." Hence the following admonitions, with many more of the like kind, in holy Scripture:—"Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." (Mark ix.

50.) "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." (Rom. xii. 18.) "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace." (Rom. xiv. 19.) "Follow peace with all men." (Heb. xii. 14.) "Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed." (2 Cor. vi. 3.) "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." (1 Cor. x. 32.)

In order to the maintenance of this spirit and habit, there must be mutual forbearance in the church; its members paying a just and becoming deference to one another, thinking favourably of each other, bearing with each other's mistakes and infirmities, and conscientiously abstaining from all whispering and backbiting. Persons addicted to these vices are the bane of Christian communities. Nor can anything be more perfectly alien from the entire spirit of Christ's religion than a quarrelsome disposition; an aptitude to take offence, and to put an unfavourable construction upon the sayings and doings of the other members of the same fraternity. If brotherly love, as our Saviour has declared, is the true badge of Christian discipleship, then the sons of discord, whose efforts are directed to the promotion of strife and hatred, are utterly unfit for the fellowship of saints, and, if they cannot be cured of their evil propensities, should be put away.

3. A kind and affectionate concern for one another's welfare is no less the duty of the members of the church of God. One great end of their union is their preservation from sin, and their growth in holiness; and hence there rests upon them an obligation to practise mutual admonition, sympathy, and encouragement. Their attention should not be directed to their own

exclusive advantage, but to the good of all. On this subject the language of Holy Scripture is very express. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. vi. 1, 2.) "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." (Rom. xii. 10, 15, 16.) "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice." (1 Cor. xii. 25, 26.) "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." (1 Thess. v. 14.) "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. x. 24, 25.) "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. iv. 18.) "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." (1 Thess. v. 11.)

According to the tenor of these texts, every member of the church, whatever may be his station, should feel that while he daily receives benefit from the other members, he is bound, as much as lieth in him, to promote their benefit in return. Perhaps nothing has more directly contributed, under God, to perpetuate and extend that revival of true religion which is known by the name of "Methodism," than the weekly class-meeting, in which

there is a mutual communication of the religious experience of the people, accompanied by united prayer, and suitable counsel and encouragement. In meetings of this kind the true communion of saints is realised, the weak are strengthened, the wavering are confirmed, the disconsolate are cheered and encouraged, and pure minds are stirred up by way of remembrance. These meetings are invariably prized in proportion to the spirituality of the members. When their love waxes cold, they are reluctant to meet their brethren, and their place in the class-room is often empty. When their love abounds, they hasten with willing feet to meet their brethren, and to declare what God hath done for their souls ; so that while they are themselves blessed of the Lord, He makes them a blessing to others. Of the men and women "that feared the Lord," in the degenerate age of the prophet Malachi, it is said that they "spake often one to another;" feeling, as it would appear, their need of help in the great matter of salvation ; and their conduct procured for them the most cheering tokens of God's approval. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels ;"—or "My special treasure," as the marginal rendering is ;—"and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." (Mal. iii. 16-18.)

In their social parties, as well as in their solemn assemblies, the members of Christ's church should not waste their time in frivolous conversation, and much less in retailing the faults of absent persons, but in direct attempts to advance in themselves and each other

the principles of true religion, especially "faith, hope, and charity," graces which should not only "abide," but continually increase; for "the Lord hearkens and hears" all the "communications that they have one with another;" and their final account will not be to them matter of joy, unless their present intercourse with each other be sanctified, and tend to edification.

4. Every member of the church should assist in the faithful conservation of the truth and ordinances of God. There is in the mind of fallen man a strange affectation of wisdom, expressing itself in attempts to *improve* the truth which God has revealed, and the ordinances which He has instituted. It is to this meddling disposition that we are to trace all the corruptions of doctrine and of worship that have ever dishonoured God and injured the souls of men. The ancient Gentiles were not satisfied with the simplicity of the patriarchal worship, and therefore turned the truth into a lie by the introduction of idolatry, with all its revolting ceremonies of cruelty and imposture. In the same manner many persons among the ancient Christians were not satisfied with the simple doctrine and rites which Christ and His apostles revealed and instituted, and therefore attempted, as they fondly thought, to improve both, till they laid the foundation of that monstrous structure of idolatry and superstition to which the name of Popery is now applied. Had all the private members of the church, as well as its ministers, from the beginning, faithfully resisted all attempts to withhold the Scriptures from the laity, and all attempts to introduce novelties in doctrine and ceremony, Popery would never have existed. It was while "men slept," that the "enemy came and sowed tares." The Jews were strictly charged to worship God exactly



in the manner that the law of Moses prescribed, without adding to the law, or omitting anything that it enjoined. The same strict adherence to the prescribed rule is equally important in the Christian church, where every attempt to depart from the truth as it is in Jesus, by whomsoever it is made, should be meekly, but firmly, resisted in the name of the Lord. "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." (1 Cor. xi. 2.)

5. Every member of the church should manifest an earnest zeal for the advancement of God's work and honour in the world.

In the New Testament we have many beautiful and touching intimations of the help afforded by the private members of the church, to the apostles and their fellow-labourers, in the fulfilment of their high commission in carrying the Gospel to every creature. When St. Paul and Barnabas went from Antioch to Jerusalem, with a reference to the settlement of the question respecting circumcision,—a question in which all the Gentile converts had a deep interest,—they were "brought on their way by the church, through Phenice and Samaria." (Acts xv. 3.) In his projected visit to Spain, St. Paul hoped to be brought on his way thitherward by the Christians at Rome. (Rom. xv. 24.) After spending a winter with the church at Corinth, he expected that, on his departure, they would "bring him on his journey, whithersoever" he might go; and he asked the same accommodation in behalf of Timothy. (1 Cor. xvi. 6, 11.) When the unseemly quarrels in the Corinthian church were at an end, and the members had generally resumed their Christian temper and habits, the apostle

said, with respect to himself, and the men who were associated with him in evangelical labour, "Having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you." (2 Cor. x. 15, 16.) It was the "rule" of St. Paul to preach the Gospel where no apostle had been before him, and therefore where Christ was not named; and he expected the zealous co-operation of the Corinthian church in this hazardous undertaking. Direct reference is made to the same subject by St. John, who thus addresses his friend Gaius: "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; who have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: because that for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth." (3 John 5-8.)

In this manner the churches lent a generous aid to the men whom Christ sent forth to evangelize the world. They defrayed the travelling expenses of these enterprising men; they supported them in prison; they united in prayer that the word of the Lord, which these men delivered, might have free course and be glorified. Often were the lives of the apostles and evangelists in imminent peril; and often were these servants of God delivered by the interposition of His hand, in answer to the earnest supplication of the churches. "In whom," says the apostle, "we trust that He will yet deliver us; ye" (Corinthians) "also helping together by prayer for us." (2 Cor. i. 10, 11.)

Christianity is intended to be the one religion of man-

kind; and the church, co-operating with its ministers, is to be God's instrument in the conversion of all nations to the faith of Christ. Hence it is that the talents, the property, the influence of every member of the church should be consecrated to God, and employed in the advancement of His truth and ordinances to the widest possible extent. At the same time every knee should be bent, and every heart lifted up in earnest prayer, that God would sanction their labours with His blessing. When all the energies of the church are brought simultaneously to bear upon the world's conversion, in the spirit of steadfast faith and of holy zeal, that great event, so long desired and expected, will be speedily accomplished.

6. The members of the church are bound to yield a just deference to their ministers, to pray for them, and to acquiesce in the general order of the community to which they belong. Ministers are intrusted with the superintendence and care of the church, so far as its spiritual interests are concerned; they are placed over the people in the Lord; and are therefore entitled to the obedience and support of those who are under their pastoral superintendence, while they fulfil their trust with fidelity, and act in the spirit of their holy vocation. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly." (Heb. xiii. 17, 18.) "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in

love for their work's sake." (1 Thess. v. 12, 13.) "Hold such in reputation ; " or, "honour such," as the words are rendered in the margin of our Bibles. (Phil. ii. 29.)

It is an unseemly thing, when the authorities of any particular church have excluded from Christian communion an unfaithful member, for any individual belonging to the church to support the offender, by justifying him, or by extenuating his evil deeds ; thus casting reflections upon those who are concerned for the purity of the church, and endeavouring to break down the hedge of discipline, instead of concurring in the righteousness of the sentence, and of labouring to bring the man to a penitent confession of his sin. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation ; and a house divided against a house falleth." (Luke xi. 17.)

VII. We advance, as a seventh general proposition, that church-government has long been a subject of eager controversy ; but that system is to be preferred which the most effectually preserves the truth uncorrupt, which fosters spiritual religion, and advances the spread of the Gospel to the widest possible extent.

We have observed that no specific plan of church-government is laid down in the Christian Scriptures ; but that certain principles are there given, which those who believe in Christ are to apply and carry into practical effect in all ages and places, as the varying circumstances of the church may require. The Gospel is to be preached with fidelity and zeal ;\* the people who receive the truth are to be united together in holy fellowship, in order to their religious usefulness in the world, and their mutual comfort and edification ; the

\* See Note DD, at the end of the volume.

churches thus gathered out of the world and organized are to be committed to the pastoral care of faithful men, who shall be their teachers, and answerable for the maintenance among them of a godly discipline; the sacraments shall be duly administered; and by the combined efforts of the ministers and their people, the means of evangelical instruction shall be extended, as much as possible, to those "that are without." Such are the "church principles" of the New Testament, which the followers of Christ in all ages are bound to adopt and carry into practical effect.

We will briefly glance at the principal forms of church-government which have been advocated, and are at present in operation.

1. The first that we will mention is diocesan episcopacy, which is practised in the Church of England and in the Church of Rome. According to this system a country is divided into districts, of greater or less extent, each of which is called a "diocese." Over every diocese is placed a bishop, in whom the government of the entire body of the clergy is vested, and who possesses the exclusive right to ordain men to the ministry; so that in his absence no valid ordination of men to the Gospel ministry ever takes place. Presbyters are associated with him in the act of ordination, as concurring parties, but the imposition of his hands is regarded as indispensable. In this department of his work a bishop of the Church of England first ordains men as deacons, giving them authority to preach the Gospel, to read the Liturgy in the congregation, to administer baptism, and to give the bread and wine in the Lord's supper; but the deacon is not allowed to consecrate the elements of that sacrament; nor, while he remains a mere deacon, is he



allowed to pronounce the form of absolution, which in the Liturgy follows the general confession. These duties, from the performance of which he is at present debarred, he is qualified to discharge by a second ordination, when he is invested with what are called "priests' orders."

Several dioceses form a province, over which is placed an archbishop. In the Church of England there are also other classes of ministers, such as archdeacons, who act as the assistants of the bishops; and deans and chancellors, who occupy a middle position between the body of the clergy and the bishop. That the ordinary ministers of the first churches were subordinate to the apostles and evangelists, by whom they were severally appointed, is undeniable; and that some subordination among them was necessary, when the apostles and evangelists were no more, cannot be disputed; for there must always be some authority to which delinquent ministers are amenable, in order that the church's purity may be preserved, and that "the ministry be not blamed," and brought into disrepute. But the manner in which that authority shall be constituted and permanently exercised, we presume has been left by Christ and His apostles to the pious discretion of ministers, in concurrence with the people of their charge; for no direct instructions on these points are found in the New Testament. Diocesan episcopacy may be adopted as one means of preserving the purity and efficiency of the church and its ministry, and may be both lawfully and beneficially exercised, as matter of voluntary arrangement; but that the elaborate hierarchy which we have just described is of Divine institution, and therefore binding upon the consciences of the entire

community in these realms, may be both sincerely believed and vehemently asserted, but can never be proved from the oracles of God.

2. Presbyterianism vests the government of the church, not in diocesan bishops, but in presbyters, who act as such, and in a corporate capacity. A part of them only are employed in preaching; but all are ordained as presbyters or elders, and all are engaged in governing the flock, and in watching over one another. In Scotland, where this system is established by law, they assemble regularly in presbyteries and in synods, exercising a jurisdiction over all the churches or parishes in a particular district. They take cognizance of moral delinquencies and of erroneous doctrine among the ministers, as well as of scandalous vices among the people who claim a right to attend the table of the Lord. The acts of the presbyteries and synods are subject to the revision of the General Assembly, which meets once in twelve months, and is the final court of appeal.

“The unity and consent of ministers is their honour, and much of their strength with their people, and takes off much prejudice and odium that would fall on single men; and singular actions bring us into contempt with them. Doubtless, as many Christians are bound to hold communion together in particular churches, so many particular churches by their guides are bound to maintain communion as far as nature makes them capable. And I hope few ministers are ignorant that these ministerial assemblies for concord among ourselves and the churches have been the constant practice of the churches of Christ, as high as we have any history to acquaint us with their practice: I mean, when persecution made it not possible. And shall we now, in the

end of the world, begin to be wiser ; and one single pastor (and perhaps of no seraphical intellectuals) correct this practice of the universal church as a needless thing ? ” \*

3. Independency, or Congregationalism, regards every distinct church, or congregation, as complete in itself ; possessing full power to choose and appoint its own minister, to fix its own terms of communion, and in every respect to regulate its own affairs, without being amenable to any man or any number of men whatever. This theory was first brought into notice in England by a clergyman of the name of Robert Brown, who lived in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, of James the First, and of the first Charles. Being much opposed in his own country, he, and many of the people who thought as he did, left their native land, and settled at Middleburgh, in Zealand ; but as they could not agree among themselves, he left them, and returned to England. He declaimed against Episcopalians and Presbyterians with equal vehemence, so as to involve himself in much trouble ; and confessed that he had been confined in no less than thirty-two different prisons. After his return from the Continent he again conformed to the Episcopal Church, so that he was not very steady in his principles. Henry Ainsworth, the learned commentator on the five Books of Moses, and on the Psalms of David, and the celebrated John Canne, who compiled the references to the Bible, entered into the views of Brown, whose followers were long known in England by the name of “Brownists.” But as the leader of the party deserted his principles, the name was at length discontinued, and

\* Baxter’s “Reformed Pastor,” Appendix.

that of "Independents" was assumed by the men who agreed with Brown in his general views.

During the Commonwealth the Independents became numerous in England; for they enjoyed the patronage of Cromwell, who bestowed on them some of the best livings in the Church, and the most honourable offices in the Universities. Among their greatest men, at this period, were Dr. John Owen, and Dr. Thomas Goodwin, men of profound theological learning, voluminous writers, and strict predestinarians. The Independents and Presbyterians occupied most of the parish-churches in England during the Commonwealth, from which they were ejected by the Act of Uniformity, in the year 1662. In the present day the English dissenters are mostly Independents; for the Baptist churches are generally founded upon the principle of Independency.

Whatever advantages may result from this form of ecclesiastical order, if we may judge from its history, it lacks the expansive and aggressive character of New-Testament Christianity which some other forms of church-government possess. It has existed in England at least two centuries and a half; but (with the exception of the time of the Commonwealth, when it obtained possession of the parish-churches—which, however, it had not built) its labours have been mostly confined to tradespeople and the middle-classes in cities, large towns, and populous localities; and it has done but little, comparatively speaking, for the labouring poor in the scattered villages of the agricultural districts. Nor has it ever succeeded to any great extent either in Ireland, or on the vast continent of America, in raising the religious and moral character of the people. When it attempts to extend its influence, even at home, it is compelled to

adopt the connexional principle, by the establishment of general societies, being comparatively powerless as it exists in the form of isolated churches. Whereas the various churches of the New Testament were all constituted upon the principle of aggression. We do not find that any of the apostles, or of their faithful auxiliaries the evangelists, ever committed a church to the care of one pastor only, as is the practice of modern Independency, but always to an indefinite number of pastors, evidently with a view to the extension of their labours in the surrounding country. The apostolical churches clearly appear to have been so constituted as to be centres of evangelical operation, intended to convey the Gospel to "the regions beyond." St. Paul, therefore, addressing the Colossian church, and speaking of Epaphras, "a servant of Christ," who appears to have been one of their own pastors, says, "I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis;" (Col. iv. 12, 13;) extending his pastoral regards, it would appear, to several affiliated churches.\*

"In the Independent way," says Baxter, "I disliked many things: as the lamentable tendency of this their way to divisions and subdivisions, and the nourishing of heresies and sects. But, above all, I disliked that most of them made the people, by majority of votes, to be church governors in excommunications, absolutions, &c.,

\* "In the apostles' times every church had a multitude of ministers; and so it must be again, or we shall never come near the primitive pattern; and then they could preach publicly, and from house to house: but now, when there is but one or two ministers to many thousand souls, we cannot so much as know them, much less teach them one by one. It is as much as we can do to discharge the public work."—Baxter's "Saints' Everlasting Rest," p. 571. Edition of 1669.



which Christ hath made an act of office ; and so they governed their governors and themselves.”\*

4. Erastianism, which is the name of another theory of ecclesiastical order, derives its name from Erastus, a German, who lived about the time of the Reformation. He taught that the Christian ministry possesses in itself no power but that of persuasion ; so that all ecclesiastical arrangements, and the enforcement of them when made, must be left to the civil authorities, as a part of their proper work. These principles are exemplified to a great extent in the Church of England, where the sovereign is the recognised head, and has the nomination of the bishops, the appointment of many of the parochial clergy, and other functionaries in the church ; and where ecclesiastical matters, even questions affecting the doctrine and the personal character of the clergy, are decided in courts where laymen are the judges. It was the determined interference of the civil power in the affairs of the Church of Scotland, which led to the rupture that took place in the year 1843, and to the formation of the Free Church in that important part of the United Kingdom.

5. In this brief sketch of the various forms of church-government that now exist, we cannot pass over in silence that which has been adopted by the Methodist body. It has not been borrowed from any other section of the church, nor formed according to any preconceived plan ; but the several regulations which it comprises have been adopted from time to time as the exigencies of a great and growing work of God seemed to require. If we may judge of its nature and value from its effects, we cannot but regard it as entitled to the approval of

\* Baxter's Life, by Sylvester, p. 143. Edition of 1696.

good men, who delight in the maintenance of truth, and in the advancement of spiritual religion. It has been a means, under God, of preserving in the ministry an uncorrupted orthodoxy, and in the societies generally true Christian godliness in its vitality and power; and under its influence the blessings of Christianity have been extended to immense masses of mankind in the four quarters of the globe. The honest boast of Mr. Wesley, uttered more than a century ago, is as true at this day as it was when he placed it upon record. "Where are those who have approved, and do approve, themselves more orthodox, more sound in their opinions? Is there a Socinian or Arian among them all? Nay, were you to recite the whole catalogue of heresies enumerated by Bishop Pearson, it might be asked, Who can lay any one of these to their charge?"\* In principle this system of church order is Presbyterian, recognising the original equality of Christ's ministers; combining, however, in practice, the advantages of a modified episcopacy;† and in its spirit it is eminently catholic and expansive, holding out the right hand of fellowship to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. It recognises the rights which are inherent in the pastoral office, but supplies just and salutary guards against the abuse of pastoral power. The ministers derive their support from the voluntary contributions of their people; and yet are sufficiently independent to preach the truth, and enforce the discipline of the body, without fear or restraint.

In respect of authority, we may apply to the Wesleyan ministry what Baxter said of the Presbyterian

\* Wesley's Works, vol. viii., p. 205. Edition of 1830.

† See Note EE, at the end of the volume.

clergy of his times : “ When all is done, we are far from granting that we have less to show for our succession from the apostles than popes or diocesans have. We are sure that we have the same baptism, eucharist, creed, Lord’s prayer, Decalogue, and Scripture, delivered down from the apostles. We are sure that we have a ministry of the same species which Christ and His Spirit in the apostles instituted. We know that our churches, and worship, and doctrine are the same that are described and settled by the apostles. We know that our present ministers are qualified as the apostles required. And that they are elected or consented to by the flocks as the apostles required. And that they have as good an ordination and investiture as the apostles ever made necessary to the ministry : that is, they have the approbation of senior pastors ; they were ordained by true bishops ; (all true presbyters are *episcopi gregis*, and join in ordination here in England ; ) and we know that such a ministry hath continued to propagate the church and Gospel in the world since the apostles’ days.”\* In addition we may say, that the Holy Spirit has so affixed His seal to the Methodist ministry, as to have made it the instrument of conversion and salvation to tens of thousands of immortal souls, redeemed by the blood of Christ ; many of whom now adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in the four quarters of the globe, while others have entered upon the rest of heaven.

The religious societies that were formed by the Wesleys and their fellow-labourers were from the beginning denominated the United Societies ; and such they have remained to this day, so as to form one entire com-

\* Baxter’s “ Answer to Dodwell and Sherlock,” pp. 54, 55. Edition of 1682.

munity. But there is nothing peculiar in this. All Episcopal and Presbyterian churches are formed upon the same principle; and certainly there is nothing in the New Testament that forbids distinct churches or societies to unite with others in even the closest alliance, especially if, by thus uniting, they can for themselves secure important religious advantages, and acquire a greater power to benefit and bless the world. Many hundreds of Wesleyan societies, resident in country villages, and consisting mostly of poor people, are not able for themselves to support a minister; but they are supplied with such a ministry as they conscientiously prefer in consequence of their union with larger and more powerful Societies. The strong help the weak; and surely such a state of things accords with the letter and spirit of Christ's religion, the religion of love, which makes all hearts one. Baxter has said, "Particular churches and pastors should be so far associated as is necessary to their mutual concord and strength; and therefore should keep frequent synods for correspondency to these ends, and by messengers and letters also keep up their brotherly concord."\* Paley has also observed, that "after men became Christians, much of their time was spent in prayer and devotion, in religious meetings, in celebrating the eucharist, in conferences, in exhortations, in preaching, in an affectionate intercourse with one another, and correspondence with other societies. Perhaps their mode of life, in its form and habit, was not very unlike the *Unitas Fratrum*, or modern Methodists."†

It is true that the Wesleyan ministers itinerate, so

\* "True and only Way of Concord," p. 143. Edition of 1686.

† "Evidences of Christianity," part i., chap. i.

that they do not ordinarily remain longer than three years in succession in the same place; but this is a matter of voluntary arrangement between themselves and the people whom they serve in the Gospel; and both parties, generally speaking, prefer these changes, which secure to the congregations a greater variety of ministerial talent than they would otherwise enjoy. But it should not be forgotten that it is no rare occurrence, both for Episcopal clergymen and Dissenting ministers to remove from one place to another, and to serve several congregations in succession: and *these* removals not unfrequently take place under such painful circumstances as in the Wesleyan community are never witnessed. They are often the result of personal misunderstandings, or they arise from the prospect of a larger income.

Perhaps the most plausible objection to the Methodist body is, that it is a sect; whereas the church of Christ is catholic or universal. But this is a mere fallacy: for the fact is, as we have already seen, that the catholic church is composed of all who hold the truth, and walk in love; and that every distinct religious community in the world is a sect, as well as the Methodist body. The Church of England is a sect; the Church of Scotland, the Lutheran Churches, the Reformed Churches of the Continent, the Church of Rome, the Greek Church, are all so many sects. No one existing community is *the* catholic church, any more than an English county is the United Kingdom of Great Britain, or Great Britain is the whole of Europe. However we may regret the separation of one denomination of Christians from another, such is the fact; and we have no power to alter it. Loud and urgent are the calls that have been



made within the last few years upon persons belonging to the Wesleyan Societies, to conform to the Episcopal Establishment of this country, that they may avoid the sin of schism, and become members of the catholic church; and members of the Church of England have been urged, with equal vehemence, and upon precisely the same grounds, to unite themselves with the Papal community. But let Methodists and English Churchmen know, that if they should comply with these solicitations they will be no nearer the catholic church than they are at present. If Methodists were to conform to the order of the Church of England, and English Churchmen conform to the Church of Rome, or to the Greek Church, they would still be separatists, and still belong to a sect.

A member of the Methodist body who is justified by faith in the blood of the Cross, sanctified by the grace of the Holy Spirit, who daily offers to God a spiritual worship, and proves the genuineness of his faith by works of evangelical obedience, is as intimately connected with the catholic church as he ever will be till he enters into the society of the blessed above. For a man to leave a religious community,—where the word of God is faithfully preached, where the Christian sacraments are duly administered, where a godly discipline is in force, and where he himself was brought to a saving knowledge of the truth,—under an apprehension that by so doing he ceases to be a separatist, and identifies himself with the catholic church, is simply a delusion. Nothing can justify him in taking such a step but a conscientious conviction, carefully formed, that he can elsewhere find better means of spiritual improvement than he at present enjoys, and better opportunities for serving God in

his generation : in other words, that he can in another community more effectually secure the great purposes of his creation, and of his redemption by the death of Christ. *These* objects constitute the main business of life ; and they are, or ought to be, the end of all ecclesiastical organization. Of what real benefit to any man is church union, even in its most perfect form, if he is neither made holy in himself, nor useful to others ? Such a man, whatever he may be called, and whatever he may think of himself, will die in his sins, and perish for ever ; for “without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” to whatever community he may belong. On the other hand, “blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God.”

“Wherein stands the power and glory of the church militant ? Does it stand in the pompous shows of ceremonious worship, with the glistening furniture thereof ? in the secular dignities and jurisdictions of the higher rank of ecclesiastics ? in the implicit faith of the laics, and in a formal uniformity in the outside of religion ? or in the powerful preaching of the Gospel, by able ministers of the New Testament ; in the lively and spiritual manner of prayer ; in the dispensation of sacraments, after a manner most effectual to the increase of knowledge, faith, and virtue ; in the exercise of discipline, to correct all contumacious disobedience against the known laws of Christ our King and Lawgiver ; and all performed in a comely order, with a grave and sober decency ? Let all unprejudiced minds give judgment, which of these two different states of religion doth most express the Gospel ministration, which is called the ministration of the Spirit, and is incomparably more glorious and powerful than the Mosaical dispensation

with all its outward and visible splendour. Let them also judge which of them is most conformable to the state of the primitive times, wherein the Christian church, not by an arm of flesh and the wisdom of this world, but by weapons mighty through God,—as the evangelical doctrine and discipline, the holiness of believers, the constancy of martyrs,—overturned the kingdom of Satan, and advanced the kingdom of Christ, where Satan's throne was; in opposition to the power of the Roman empire, the wisdom of the learned heathens, the counsels of politicians, the potency of ancient customs, the inveterate prejudice of all sorts of people; and, lastly, in opposition to the devil, reigning and raging in them all. Wherefore let us mind the true way of restoring the Christian religion to its primitive power and glory." \*

"And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation;"—or, "with outward show;"—"neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke xvii. 20, 21.) "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.)

Judging from these texts, and from others of the same kind, which we find in the New Testament, we cannot hesitate to say that many bright examples of Christianity, in its holiness, benevolence, vitality, and power, have been, and yet are, seen in all the communities now mentioned; Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Inde-

\* Carbutt's "Interest of England in the Matter of Religion," pp. 270-273. Edition of 1661.

pendent, Baptist, and Methodist. The parties belonging to them may therefore well bear with each other, and maintain a spirit of mutual esteem and affection, even when they adhere with tenacity to their own peculiarities of theological opinion, forms of church-government; and modes of public worship. While they do this, with all their differences, they are one body in Christ. Schism, as we have seen, does not consist in varieties of judgment and action, but in malignant tempers, with their corresponding fruits, railing, detraction, and strife. "See that ye fall not out by the way," said Joseph to his brothers, about to return to their father Jacob in Canaan; and with still greater propriety may this advice be given to the children of God, in their way to the house of their common Father in heaven. Let them here, by the cultivation of the Christian spirit, the spirit of holy love, anticipate their endless union with each other, and with all the inhabitants of heaven. To prepare men for that state is the end of all Christian ordinances, and of all church-organization; and if they be not thus prepared, into the general assembly and church of the firstborn they will never be allowed to enter.

## NOTES.

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### *Note A, page 10.*

“**TOUCHING** the Gentiles, we have no history before the flood, nor till a long time after; in which space of time this doctrine of the institution of the Sabbath, being carried only by tradition, might easily be obliterated. The Scriptures Divine are the most ancient records in the world: but it follows not that because the Scriptures do not record how the patriarchs did observe the Sabbath, therefore they observed it not; but much rather, because the Scriptures record that the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, therefore the patriarchs did observe it. And the truth is, until the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt, we read not of the church of God anywhere but in single families. Neither do we read of the patriarchs before the flood, or a long time after, that they kept any day consecrate to God’s service: will it therefore follow, that those holy patriarchs did set no time at all apart for God’s service? Yet it is generally acknowledged, as by the light of nature, that some time ought to be set apart for Divine service.”—Twisse’s “Morality of the Fourth Commandment,” pp. 57, 58. Edition of 1641.

### *Note B, page 14.*

“**ASK** after the ancient paths, and the Sabbath will be found to be one of them. This is not of the law, but of the fathers. It is the first-born of ordinances, and hath a double portion of honour due to it. It was the first day of



comfort to the world after Adam was adjudged to toil and misery. The consideration of these ends of the Sabbath may serve to assoil that controversy about the antiquity of its institution; namely, whether its institution was not before the giving of the law? In the dispute about the Sabbath afoot in England some years ago, there were some went so high, (shall I say?) or so low, as to maintain that our Sabbath was not of Divine institution, but ecclesiastical only; not ordained by God, but the church. And to make good this assertion, they would persuade you, that there was no Sabbath instituted before the giving of the law. None from the beginning, but that the world was two thousand five hundred and thirteen years without a Sabbath; for so long it was from the Creation to Israel's going out of Egypt; and that then, not before, was the law for the Sabbath given.

“Then, I pray, why should Moses speak of God's sanctifying the Sabbath when he is speaking of the first week of the world, if he meant not that the seventh day of that week was sanctified; and what sense were it to read the command thus: ‘For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, &c., and rested the seventh day; therefore two thousand five hundred and thirteen years after He blessed the seventh day and hallowed it?’ But read it as it lies before you, ‘He rested the seventh day: therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it;’ and must it not needs mean He blessed that seventh day; that He rested, and sanctified it, and so the seventh successively in following generations?”

“Adam should have kept the Sabbath, had he continued in innocency: then certainly he had more need of a Sabbath, for the benefit of his soul, when he was become a sinner.”

—Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii., p. 1328. Edition of 1684.

“Moses pretends to give a plain history of the creation, and of what happened thereupon. ‘On the seventh day,’

saith he, 'God ended His work ; and He rested the seventh day from all His works that He had made ; and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it He rested from all His works.' Now, say these people, the meaning of these words is no more than this : 'God rested the seventh day from all His works that He had made, and twenty-four hundred years after, at Marah, He blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it to the people of Israel.' But I appeal to any man, whether this be not a plain force upon the words ; and whether any man of sense, that should meet with such a passage in any other historian, could possibly so interpret it. But this is our comfort, that though some of the Jews talk after this manner, yet the discreetest and those that are incomparably the best and most judicious writers of that nation are of another opinion, and own the institution of the Sabbath to have been from the creation of the world. And, indeed, if there had not been such express testimony of Scripture for it, yet there are a great many other arguments that would have persuaded us thereunto."—Archbishop Sharp's Works, vol. iv., p. 211. Edition of 1754.

"We are informed, in the history of the creation, that the Maker of the world, having finished His work in six days, (which He could as easily have finished in one moment, had it not been for some valuable reason, probably of instruction to us,) 'blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it : ' that is, appointed every return of it to be religiously kept, as a solemn memorial, that 'of Him,' and therefore 'to Him, are all things.' It is much the most natural to apprehend that this appointment took place from the time when it is mentioned ; from the time when the reason of it took place. And it is no wonder at all, that, in so short a history, notice should not be taken of the actual observation of it before Moses."—Archbishop Secker's Works, vol. vi., p. 211. Edition of 1825.

"Moses, the better to impress upon the minds of his

people the observance of the Sabbath, acquaints them with the early institution of it; that it was enjoined by God Himself, on His finishing the work of creation.”—Bishop Warburton’s “Divine Legation of Moses,” vol. ii., p. 405. Edition of 1846.

*Note C, page 16.*

“THIS primeval measure of time was instituted as a memorial of the work of creation in six days, and of the ensuing Sabbath, or day of rest; (Gen. ii. 2, 3;) and was used by the Creator Himself in His denunciation of the deluge. (Gen. vii. 4.) It was twice employed by Noah in the ark; (Gen. viii. 10–12;) and Jacob’s marriage-feast lasted a week. (Gen. xxix. 27.)

“It was therefore universally observed by Noah’s descendants during the prevalence of the patriarchal religion: but when mankind degenerated and sunk into idolatry, the primitive institution was neglected, and at length lost; and the days of the week were dedicated by the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Syrians, &c., to the heavenly host, the sun, moon, and planets.

“Hence the Israelites, during their residence in Egypt, became infected with the idolatry of the country, and omitted, either voluntarily or by compulsion, the observance of the Sabbath, until it was revived in the desert, sanctioned by the miracle of the manna, which was intermitted on the Sabbath-day, and solemnly re-enacted on Mount Sinai, and made one of the laws of the Decalogue, and its violation punished with death.”

“Some astronomers and chronologers have imagined that the week was a natural measure of time, furnished by the four principal phases or quarters of the moon, which last each about a week; but it was unquestionably derived from the Divine institution at the creation, handed down by primitive

tradition.”—Hales’s Chronology, vol. i., pp. 18, 19. Edition of 1830.

“We learn from Josephus, Philo, Tibullus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Lucian, (for I need not mention the Hebrews,) that the memory of the seven days’ work” [of the creation] “was preserved not only among the Greeks and Italians, by honouring the seventh day, but also amongst the Celtæ and Indians, who all measured the time by weeks; as we learn from Philostratus, Dion Cassius, and Justin Martyr, and also the most ancient names of the days.”—Grotius on the Truth of the Christian Religion, book i., sect. 16.

*Note D, page 40.*

“*Ye shall kindle no fire*—for any servile work, as that of smiths or plumbers. We do not find that ever this prohibition extended farther.”—Wesley’s “Notes on the Old Testament.”

“The spirit of this precept is the prohibition of *servile work*; and since it is as really a servile work to mend and keep up a fire by supplying it with fuel, as to kindle it, the injunction, taken strictly, must be considered prohibitory of one as well as of the other. Let us suppose to ourselves, then, a case of sickness, such as in any way, whether for the production of extra warmth, or for the preparation of medical applications, required the use of fire: or let us suppose a Jew settled in a cold climate, where a fire was indispensable, amidst the frost and damps of winter, not to comfort only, but to health: or, indeed, we need not go beyond the winters of Judæa itself. Has not Jesus given us a principle, applicable, in the full spirit of it, to all such cases? Has He not here taught us that the prohibitory injunction was not, and never could be, intended for literal,

universal, exceptionless application?—that it did not warrant the condemnation of either kindling or keeping up a fire on the Sabbath in all possible circumstances, any more than the injunction, ‘In it thou shalt not do ANY WORK,’ warranted the reprehension of the disciples by the scribes and Pharisees ‘for plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath-day.’” —Wardlaw’s “Discourses on the Sabbath,” pp. 144, 145. Edition of 1832.

*Note E, page 68.*

“CHRIST had power and authority to change the Sabbath. ‘The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.’ (Mark ii. 28.) He had power over all Divine ordinances. ‘And Moses verily was faithful in all His house, as a servant;... but Christ as a Son over His own house.’ (Heb. iii. 5, 6.) He is not a servant in the house, but a Son, to dispose of the affairs of the house as He sees good. He is greater than the temple, and so may order the affairs of the temple as He saw good.

“If a Jew question why He laid by the ceremonies of Moses, the answer is ready: Because He was greater than Moses, Lord of the house, in which Moses was but a servant. Nay, it was He that appointed Moses those ceremonies, and He might unappoint them at His pleasure. That is observable: ‘This is that Moses that was in the church in the wilderness, with the Angel which spake to him in the Mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us.’ (Acts vii. 38.) *With the Angel.* Who was that? It was Christ, the great ‘Angel of the covenant,’ as He is called, Mal. iii. 1; the Angel of God’s presence, as He is called, Isai. lxiii. 9. Then who spake with Moses at Mount Sinai? It was Christ. Who gave him the ‘lively oracles,’ laws, testimonies, statutes? It was Christ. And then might Christ that gave them dispose of them as seemed Him good. So that if a Jew question why Christ changed



circumcision into baptism, the paschal lamb into bread and wine, the Jewish Sabbath into the Christian Sabbath; the answer is ready: He was Lord of them, and might dispose of them. He set up circumcision, the passover, the Jewish Sabbath, and might take them down, and alter them, as He pleased."—Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii., p. 1329. Edition of 1684.

*Note F, page 69.*

"CHRIST sending down the Spirit on His apostles on the day of Pentecost hath not so much force, considered alone, but only in a conjunct consideration with Christ's resurrection on that day. And like as after His death He arose on that day, manifesting Himself mightily thereby to be the Son of God; so after His ascension into heaven He came down by His Spirit on that day, the seventh first day of the week after His resurrection, manifesting thereby, as Peter signifieth, that He had obtained the dispensation of the Spirit. We do not say the Spirit was on the day of Pentecost sent down because it was the Lord's day, but being sent down on that day, as the law is confessed to have been delivered on that day,—this tends to the marking out of that day more and more for the manifestation of the power of Christ. That day they receiving power from on high, by the descending of the Holy Ghost upon them, whereby they were enabled to preach the Gospel; and that day of the week which is set apart for Divine service as our Christian Sabbath; as that day whereon the Holy Ghost doth ordinarily come down upon His servants in the ministry of His word, and celebration of the sacraments, and putting up of our joint prayers unto Him for the sanctifying and edifying of Christ's body, which is the church: and even in this respect that day hath a far better congruity to the day that is to be set apart for Divine service than any other day in the week besides. The day of His ascension He

departed from them as touching His presence corporal ; but on the day of Pentecost He came down upon them as touching His presence spiritual : and so He doth still in our Sabbath exercises on the Lord's day, though not in so extraordinary a manner, yet no less effectually, to that edification and sanctification of our souls."—Twisse's " Morality of the Fourth Commandment," p. 120. Edition of 1641.

*Note G, page 74.*

"Now their authority" [that of the apostles] "is no less than Divine. 1. Because they were instructed by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in all things which He heard from His Father, (John xv. 15,) who gave them commandments concerning the kingdom of God, by the infusion of His Spirit to make them receive the same. (Acts i. 2.) 2. For that they had this Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth, (John xvi. 13,) in teaching, both for matter and manner ; (Acts ii. 4, 8, 14 ; 1 Cor. ii. 13 ;) in answering adversaries. (Matt. x. 20 ; Mark xiii. 11 ; Luke xii. 12 ;) in resolving doubts ; (Acts x. 19 ; xi. 12 ;) in decreeing canons, and judging of controversies, for settling of men's minds in the church ; (Acts xv. 28 ;) in rebuking sharply the wicked ; (Acts xiii. 9 ;) in ordering matters in the congregation ; (1 Cor. xiv. 37 ; vii. 12 ;) in ordination of ministers, whom they ordained in every church ; (Acts xiv. 23 ;) and these, so ordained by them, are said to be set over the people by the Holy Ghost ; (Acts xx. 28 ;) no doubt because the holy apostles were guided by the Holy Ghost in such ordinations : yea, in their advice about things indifferent they had assistance of God's Spirit. (1 Cor. vii. 40.)

"Now then, put all these things together, can it be imagined that the apostles' observing this day, (Acts xx. 7,) and setting a glorious title upon it, (Rev. i. 10,) that it can be other than Divine, they guided herein by the Holy Ghost ? who ordained also upon this day, the first day of

the week, to prepare for the poor. And why on this day? Because, as Bishop White saith, it was the Christians' weekly holy-day: which being, as is afore witnessed, apostolical, and the apostles so in all things guided by the Holy Ghost, this day must needs be of Divine authority.

"This the Church of Auspurg, Act. vii., confesseth, that the day was changed by apostolical authority, directed by the Spirit.

"As it is in these respects of Divine authority, so farther, also, because it hath Jesus Christ the Institutor of it." —Bernard's "Threefold Treatise of the Sabbath," pp. 129, 130. Edition of 1641.

*Note H, page 76.*

"WHATSOEVER in holy writ is said to be the Lord's denominatively, *that* He is the Author and Institutor of: as, for instance, 'the Lord's supper,' and 'the Lord's table,' because He ordained it. (1 Cor. xi. 20; x. 21.) 'The Sabbath of the Lord,' because He commanded it; 'the temple of the Lord,' because He appointed it; 'the people of the Lord,' because He chose them; 'the messengers of the Lord,' because He sends them; 'the apostles of Christ,' because He put them into that office. No instance can be given to show the contrary. But this day is denominatively called 'the Lord's.' (Rev. i. 10.) 'Therefore it is so called by Divine institution, for Divine worship, and as it hath Jesus Christ for the Author and Institutor of it.'" —Bernard's "Threefold Treatise of the Sabbath," pp. 131, 132. Edition of 1641.

*Note I, page 93.*

As an example of the treatment which conscientious clergymen met with in those evil times, we will mention the case of Mr. George Walker, pastor of St. John the Evangelist's church, in London, as it is stated by himself in

an address to “the Earl of Bedford, the Earl of Warwick, Viscount Say and Seale, Viscount Mandeville, Lord Brooke, Lord Roberts, and the rest of the Honourable Lords Committees of the Upper House of Parliament :”—“By God’s special providence, I, having handled the doctrine of the creation, out of Gen. i., was, by my order of preaching and expounding of that Scripture, led along and brought to this text concerning God’s sanctifying of the seventh day, at that very time when a book of liberty for sports on the Lord’s day was, by the bishops in every diocese, sent to every parish-church, and commanded to be publicly read by every minister in time of Divine service, in the audience of all the people. And because I proceeded to handle this subject, as the order of my text did lead me, and durst not baulk that part of God’s word, I was three several times convented before my ordinary, and admonished, under pain of suspension, to proceed no further in this doctrine; not for any error that could be objected against any part or passage in it, but only because the times would not bear it. And because I did not hold it fit nor safe for me to obey man rather than God, by concealing from my flock any part of God’s truth, and shunning to declare unto them the whole counsel of God, I have undergone the high displeasure of that primate to whose jurisdiction my church doth belong, who, upon divers false informations of catchers, which have been employed to entrap me in my words, that they might have something whereof to accuse me, hath caused me to be convented before the King’s Majesty, and the Lords of his Honourable Privy Counsel, and hath charged and accused me to be a preacher of factious and seditious doctrine, and for many years the great troubler of the city of London. Whereupon I was committed close prisoner for two-and-twenty weeks, and through close custody was by sickness brought near unto death, and could not obtain so much liberty as to be confined to the limits of my brother’s

house, for the safety of my life, and upon bail of one thousand pound given, until, by the testimony of fifty-five neighbour ministers of best report in and about the city, I was declared to be innocent and free from all the crimes of which I was accused.”—Walker’s “*Doctrine of the Holy Sabbath*,” Dedication. Edition of 1641.

*Note K, page 96.*

IN the Dedication to the Lords Temporal and the Members of the House of Commons of his very valuable Treatise on the Sabbath Patriarchal, Mosaical, and Christian, Bernard says: “There hath been no Christian church beyond the seas, departed from Rome, which hath given so much honourable respect unto the Lord’s day, our Christian Sabbath, as we in this our flourishing kingdom and nation: and it was our glory so to honour the Lord Christ; and it will be our great unhappiness to fail in this our Christian duty, so confirmed by Scripture, and the general practice of all true worshippers of His glorious name throughout the whole Christian world, the space of these sixteen hundred years.

“Yet in this our time, and of late days, are stepped up among us vain men, profane enough, who have attempted to deprive Christ Jesus of His glory, (in the religious observation of this day, grounded upon His glorious resurrection,) and us of our spiritual consolation, in keeping an whole day set apart for His worship and service.

“For this end books upon books have been written, and by licence passed the press, to take away the morality of the fourth commandment, never in any age heretofore doubted of; to make also people believe that our Christian Sabbath hath no warrant from thence, and that it is not of Divine institution, but alterable from that day of the week, equalizing their devised holidays with it, and allowing also



the like vain sports upon this day as upon other days; calling such as religiously set the whole day apart for holy uses Sabbatarians and Judaizers; thus reproaching, and in their sense belying, those that more truly honour Christ than they do.

“And that they might securely go on in these their profane errors without control, and persuade the more inconsiderate sort that what they have written are truths and unanswerable, they have stopped the means of printing sound antidotes to their empoisoned propositions; whereupon they have been bold to insult over godly orthodox divines, with too many words of insolency, scorn, and much contempt; which they have borne with great patience, waiting the Lord’s leisure, till He should be pleased, in His good time, to give liberty for the publishing of their learned labours, which have of long time lien by them.

“And now, blessed be God, the time is come; the way is made open by your honourable wisdoms, goodness, power, and authority, for godly and learned men to discover the vain boastings and the folly of those evil ones, to the view of all. Some of ours proceed polemically, and have made answer fully to the best-esteemed of those profane writers. Some only write positively, to discover the truth, and to make it known in a plain way, that the meanest capacity may be rightly informed. This way I have taken in this threefold treatise; humbly craving pardon for my bold presumption, in presenting to your honourable view these my weak endeavours.”

*Note L, page 172.*

“THE preface to the book of ordination saith that ‘it is evident to all men reading Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, that from the apostles’ time there have been these **ORDERS** in Christ’s church,—bishops, priests, and deacons, as

several OFFICES ; ' which are repeated oft in the collects at ordination.

"Some of us are conscious that we have diligently read the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, and yet three ORDERS and OFFICES are not evident to us. We have great reason to believe that Calvin, Beza, and many more Reformers, Blondel, Salmasius, Robert Parker, Gersom, Bucer, Calderwood, Cartwright, John Reynolds, Ames, Ainsworth, and multitudes of such Protestants, did diligently read both Scriptures and ancients ; as also Dr. Stillingfleet, Bishop Edward Reynolds, and many such, who thought that Scripture instituted no particular forms of government ; as also Armachanus, and many other Papists ; who think that bishops and priests do not differ *ordine*, but *gradu* ; which the Right Reverend Archbishop Ussher ordinarily professed. We cannot assert that none of these diligently read Scripture or ancient authors."—Baxter's "Nonconformists' Plea for Peace," p. 194. Edition of 1679.

*Note M, page 197.*

"It is much insisted on that these angels were bishops of a superior order to that of presbyters. Whereupon let it be considered, 1. That the title of stars and angels are not proper, but figurative and mystical, names, made use of in a mystical book ; and that the said names are common to all ministers." "2. That the name 'angel' may be taken collectively, not individually." "As the civil state of the Pagano-Christian empire is called a beast, and the ecclesiastical state the whore ; so the angel may signify the whole presbytery, put in the singular number to hold proportion to the seven stars, which signify the same thing, and the seven candlesticks. In these epistles to the churches there are indications that not a single person, but a company, is represented under this name. (Rev. ii. 10, 16, 24, 25.)"—Corbet's "Remains," p. 125. Edition of 1684.

Baxter takes a somewhat different view of this subject. He says:—"I must confess that the great argument..... from the title of 'angel' given to the bishops, Rev. ii. and iii., did never seem of any weight to me, nor moved my understanding that way at all; believing that Tyconius's old exposition, mentioned by Austin, is liker to be true; and that it is neither one prelate, nor all the clergy, but the whole churches, which is meant by 'the angel of the churches.' For, the prophecy coming by vision, the word 'angel' is mentioned in the vision-phrase; and oft in that book is by all confessed to signify collective bodies, and more than single individuals: as Ussher himself holdeth that by 'the false prophet,' in the singular number, is meant the Roman clergy." "The whole style of the text doth easily prove this opposition,...as the praises and dispraises there seem to refer to the whole church. What can be more express than, 'Hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,'... which is repeated and spoken to every one of the seven? It is liker to be the whole society than the bishop that is reproved for having false teachers and heretics among them, and are called quickly to repent."—Baxter's "Treatise of Episcopacy," p. 69. Edition of 1681.

*Note N, page 198.*

"IN each church there was one pastor or ruling minister, to whom all the rest were subordinate. This pastor, bishop, or overseer, had the peculiar care over that flock: on him the prosperity of that congregation in a great measure depended, and he was to answer for all those souls at the judgment-seat of Christ."—Wesley on Rev. i. 20.

"My sentiment is, that, as in their consistories and congregations it would be necessary, for the sake of order, that one should preside both in the offices of religion, and in their consultations for the common good, it is their

president or chairman that is here addressed under the name of ‘the angel.” A regulation of this kind all sorts of societies are led to adopt from necessity, in order to prevent confusion in conducting business; and those Christian societies would also fall into it by example. They had adopted the name *πρεσβυτέριον*, presbytery, or ‘senate,’ from the name frequently given to the Jewish sanhedrim. The term *πρεβύτερος*, elder or senator, they had also borrowed from the title given to the members of that council. Nothing could be more natural than to derive from that court also the practice of conducting their affairs more decently and expeditiously by the help of a president.”—Campbell’s “Lectures on Ecclesiastical History,” vol. i., pp. 159, 160. Second Edition.

“Certain it is, that the very names of church-officers were borrowed from the synagogue, which had also its elders, overseers, deacons, or almoners; and amongst whom one usually presided, who was called ‘the angel of the congregation,’ the title given by our Lord in the Apocalypse to the presidents of Christian assemblies.”—*Ibid.*, p. 219.

*Note O, page 204.*

As a specimen of the manner in which even sensible and learned men choose to dogmatize on this subject, we select the following advice addressed to a young clergyman:—“In the lamentable ignorance of church principles, which at present unhappily prevails, it is **ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY** that you should, from time to time, as occasion serves, set forth discreetly, but **BOLDLY**, the doctrine of the apostolic succession; **THE FACT** that the **BISHOPS ALONE** have received authority in the church of Christ to **ORDAIN MINISTERS**, and the claim which ministers so ordained have to the attention of the people.”—Gresley’s “*Ecclesiastes Anglicanus*,” p. 44. Edition of 1844.

Correct knowledge, accompanied by clear and decisive proof, is generally regarded as the proper antidote to "lamentable ignorance;" but Mr. Gresley seems to think that bold assertion is more appropriate, so far as "the doctrine of the apostolic succession" is concerned. The truth is, its advocates have nothing better to allege in its support. Yet, after all, bold assertion, while it stuns an uninformed multitude, leaves them as "lamentably ignorant" as it found them. It may produce a blind and wondering submission, but never that enlightened and conscientious conviction which alone is worthy of a Christian man.

*Note P, page 225.*

"MINISTERS themselves will consult with the wise, and love the good, and learn of those who are ablest to teach them, and imitate the ablest preachers as near as they can. So that I may truly say that there is a certain kind of natural, or rather spiritual, episcopacy everywhere exercised in the church. A great light that burneth and shineth above others will draw the eyes of many to it; and if it be set on a hill, it will hardly be hid. Calvin was no prelate; and yet his gifts procured him that interest, by which he prevailed more than prelates for the conformity of the minds of many to his own. There is scarce a country but hath some able, judicious minister, who hath the interest of a bishop with the rest, though he have no higher office than themselves. God's graces deserve and will procure respect. Even in civil councils, courts, committees, we see that some one of leading parts is the head of the rest, though their authority be equal."—Baxter's "Five Disputations of Church Government," p. 295. Edition of 1659.

*Note Q, page 230.*

BAXTER, who lived in habits of intimacy with Archbishop



Ussher, says, "I asked him also his judgment about the validity of presbyters' ordination, which he asserted, and told me that the king asked him at the Isle of Wight, wherever he found in antiquity that presbyters alone ordained any; and that he answered, 'I can show your Majesty more, even where presbyters alone successively ordained bishops; and instanced in Jerome's words, *Epist. ad Evagrium*, of the presbyters of Alexandria choosing and making their own bishops from the days of Mark till Heraclius and Dionysius."—Sylvester's "Life of Baxter," p. 206. Edition of 1696.

"A parochial or congregational pastor, having assistant presbyters and deacons, either existent or in expectation, was the bishop that was in the days of Ignatius, Justin, Tertullian, and that Dr. Hammond describeth as meant in many Scriptures and existent in those days." "The ordination that is now performed by these parochial bishops, especially in an assembly guided by their moderator, is beyond all just exception valid, as being by such bishops as the apostles planted in the churches, and nearer the way of the primitive church than the ordination by the...species of prelates is. As the presbyters of the church of Alexandria did themselves make one their bishop, whom they chose from among themselves, and set him in a higher degree,.....so may the presbyters of a parochial church now."—Baxter's "Disputation vindicating the Protestant Churches and Ministers that have not Prelatical Ordination," p. 105. Edition of 1658.

*Note R, page 233.*

"WHERE there are more pastors in such a church than one, I know of no *necessity* that one should have any superiority over another; nor can I prove that it was so from the beginning. Some divines of the prelatical judgment think that

this was an ordinance of the apostles, at the first planting of such churches. Others of them think that it was of their *appointment*, but not actually *existent* till after Scripture times. Others of them think that, as Jerome saith, it began when factions rose in the church, not by Divine ordination, but ecclesiastical agreement, for the preventing or cure of schism.”—Baxter’s “Five Disputations of Church Government,” p. 309. Edition of 1659.

*Note S, page 244.*

“THE Scripture telleth us of no church elders but what were ordained, and of none but such as were of the same office with the preaching pastors or elders; of none that had not authority to baptize and administer the Lord’s supper; nor doth church history tell us of any other as a Divine office. But when one assembly had many elders or pastors, those that were best gifted for public sermons did preach, and the rest did help to rule the church, and to catechise, and instruct and visit particular families and persons, and other parts of the office, as there was cause. But now we have concluded that there is a distinct office of ruling elders, who need not be ordained, and who have no power to baptize, or to administer the Lord’s supper. This, I think, is a superstition; for we feign God to have made a church-office which He never made; and though we must honour and hold communion with the churches which have this blemish, yet still it cannot be freed from superstition.”—Baxter’s “Cure of Church Divisions,” p. 288. Edition of 1670.

“The only place that hath a show of mentioning the ruling elder in the church, that is not a minister of the Gospel, is 1 Tim. v. 17: ‘Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine;’ but this hath nothing cogently

to evince two different kinds of officers; but that of those in the same office some may be employed more especially in one part of the work thereof, and others in another part; and that the being more abundantly employed in the word and doctrine hath the pre-eminence. The emphasis lies in *κοπιῶντες*, signifying that they did more especially or abundantly labour therein; but not implying that others did not meddle therewith. And learned men observe that *τιμὴ* is 'maintenance;' which is not used to be given to this kind of officer we are now inquiring of; for they are such as have secular employment to live by.

"The enumeration of divers gifts (Rom. xii. 6) doth not infer the institution of divers offices; for he that giveth, and he that sheweth mercy, may be the same man; so he that teacheth, and he that exhorteth, and he that ruleth, may be the same, for they are all proper acts of the pastoral office. Likewise in 1 Cor. xii. 28, those two expressions, 'helps' and 'governments,' do necessarily infer the institution of two functions no more than 'miracles' and 'gifts of healing,' there also mentioned, do infer the same."—Corbet's "Remains," p. 58. Edition of 1684.

The theory, that ruling elders, distinct from the ministers of the word, were appointed by the apostles, is at large disproved by Dr. Field, "Of the Church," book v., chap. xxvi.

*Note T, page 246.*

"I AFFIRM that of itself it is lawful to choose a president that shall be fixed *durante vitâ*." "It is nowhere forbidden in nature or in Scripture, directly or by consequence: and therefore it is lawful. Where there is no law, there is no transgression." "But it is lawful to choose such a one for a year, or seven years, and therefore also for life." "That which maketh for the unity of the churches or

pastors, and is not forbidden by Christ, is both lawful and desirable ; but such is a stated presidency." "The person that is most fit should be chosen president."—Baxter's "Five Disputations of Church Government," pp. 298, 299. Edition of 1659.

*Note U, page 248.*

"THERE be essential and integral acts of the sacred ministry, instituted by Christ. These none may take the power of from Ministers, nor alter the species or integrity of the office, by setting up any such superiors as shall deprive them of that which Christ hath instituted, or arrogating the like uncalled. But as in worship, so in order and church-government, there are undetermined accidents ; as, to choose the time and place of synods, to preside and moderate, and such like."

"Some call these human accidental orders forms of government, and affirm (as Bishop Reynolds did, and Dr. Stillingfleet in his 'Irenicon,' and many excellent men by him cited) that no form of church-government is of Divine command : which is true of all this second sort of government, which is but accidental and human ; but not at all of the first sort, which is Divine and essential to Christ Himself first, and to pastors, as such, by His appointment ; so that the essential government of the universal church by Christ, and of each particular church by pastors specified by Him,.....are of unalterable Divine right. But the human forms are alterable. Such I account—1. The presidency and moderatorship and accidental government of one bishop over the other presbyters, deacons, &c. ; 2. The accidental government of a diocesan as an archbishop over these lowest bishops and churches ; 3. And the superiority of metropolitans and patriarchs over them." "These *totâ specie* differ from the Divine offices."—Baxter's "Catholic Communion," p. 24. Edition of 1684.

*Note W, page 266.*

“THOUGH we renounce fanatic enthusiasts, yet serious consideration maketh some of us think that too little notice is taken of the HOLY GHOST setting pastors over the flocks, which the Scripture mentioneth: and though none on pretence of the Spirit must reject order or ordination, nor make themselves the sole judges of their own sufficiency; yet, 1. The due qualification of men with wisdom, faith, love, and heavenly zeal, and ability, is the most excellent part of our calling to the ministry. 2. Without necessary fitness no man is a true pastor: and without eminent fitness few are eminently serviceable. 3. Experience assureth us, that though the office hath supernumeraries, yet of worthy men God never yet raised up supernumeraries, but the scarcity is lamentably great. 4. All, therefore, that are duly qualified, and have opportunity, should be chosen, ordained, accepted, and accept the call, if not offer themselves, in case they cannot otherwise enter. 5. The ordainer doth but ministerially invest him with the power, whom the Spirit of God hath qualified for it by the inward call. 6. In case the ordainers, by envy, or malignity, or faction, refuse such, where there is true necessity and opportunity, we conceive that mutual consent of the people and themselves may suffice to the orderly admittance into the office.”—Baxter’s “Non-conformists’ Plea for Peace,” pp. 310, 311. Edition of 1679.

*Note X, page 272.*

“THE ordainers do not give the power as from themselves, nor doth it pass through their hands. They are but the occasions and the instruments of inauguration, or solemn possession, when their interposition is due. It is the standing act of Christ in His law that giveth the power



immediately : I say immediately, as without any mediate receiving and conveying cause that is directly efficient of the power itself ; though not so immediately as to exclude all preparations and perfecting instruments, accidental causes, and other means. As, in case of marriage, it is the woman's consent that is of necessity to the designation of the person that shall be her husband : but it is not her consent that properly giveth him the power of an husband over her : for that is done by God Himself, in that law by which He constituteth the husband to be the head of the wife, and determineth *in specie* of his power ; which one determination immediately conferreth the power on all individual persons when once they are chosen and named : so that the elector of the person doth but prepare and dispose him to receive the power, and not give it. He doth but open the door, and let men into the ministry, and not give it."—Baxter's "Five Disputations of Church Government," p. 146. Edition of 1659.

"The people may choose, and the pastors may invest ; but it is God only by the Gospel charter that confers the power from Himself."

"Hence it is plain that the argument is vain that is commonly used by the prelates, from *Nemo dat quod non habet* ; for it falsely supposeth that the ordainers are the givers of power,—the master-error of their frame. Christ hath it, and Christ giveth it. Men give it not, though some of them have it ; for they have it only to use, and not to give."—*Ibid.*, p. 147.

"We may truly say that the Holy Ghost maketh pastors or overseers of the church, as well as formerly He did ; (Acts xx. 28 ;) because He giveth them their gifts, though not such miraculous gifts as some then had. By His common gifts of knowledge and utterance, and His special gifts of grace, it is the Spirit that still makes ministers, and still Christ giveth pastors to the church."—*Ibid.*, p. 221.

“We receive not our office by the gift of man, whether presbyters or prelates. The power is immediately from Christ; and men do but open the door, or determine of the person that shall from Christ receive the power, and then put him solemnly into possession. It is the first error of the adversaries to hold that this power is given by men as first having it themselves.”—*Ibid.*, p. 234.

“Though such as Mr. Dodwell would persuade men that we have just so much power and work as the ordaining bishops intended to give us; yet Christ is Christ, whether these men will or not, and hath described the pastoral office, which no man hath power to alter; and it is the same in all the world. And it is one, therefore, in that it is one sort of work which they have all to do; and one church catholic whose public good they are all to promote, and one end to attain.”—Baxter’s “Answer to Dodwell and Sherlock,” p. 216. Edition of 1682.

*Note Y, page 282.*

“THE ministers of Christ, as stewards of the mysteries of God, are the pastors of the church; and pastoral authority includes both teaching and ruling, and implies the people’s subjection in the Lord to their doctrine and discipline. To bereave the church of discipline, is to leave it unfurnished of that means which is necessary to the preservation of all orderly societies of mankind. It is to turn the garden of the Lord, by plucking up the fence thereof, into a common or wilderness. The power intrinsical to this office is not secular and coercive by temporal penalties, but purely spiritual; which is, in the name of Christ, and by authority from Him the Chief Pastor, to watch over the flock, to encourage them that live conformably to the Gospel by the consolations thereof, and to warn them that walk disorderly,

and, if they continue obstinate therein, to declare them unworthy of church communion and Christian converse, and to require the faithful to have no fellowship with them, to the intent that they may be humbled and reformed.”—Corbet’s “Kingdom of God among Men,” pp. 54, 55. Edition of 1679.

*Note Z, page 341.*

“NEVER, since the creation, can it be proved that God had anywhere a church on earth from which infants were excluded from being members, if there were any among them. They were members before the law under the promise, under the law, under the Gospel through the Christian world to this day ; and yet they (the Baptists) would needs make Christ a church now without them. As if Christ had missed it in the forming of His church till now ! or, as if He begun to be a-weary of infants in His church now at last ! or, as if the providence of God did now begin to be awakened to have a right-formed church in the conclusion of the world, and to eject those infants as incapable who till now have been in the bosom of His family.”—Baxter’s “Reformed Pastor,” p. 203. Edition of 1657.

*Note AA, page 443.*

“WHAT harm doth it to me, or any other,—if my pride will let me be quiet,—if men that differ from me in some points of judgment do quietly worship God by themselves ? But it is so rare for separated assemblies not to make it their religion and work to make others odious, and factiously to draw disciples and associates to themselves, that they must thank themselves that others are so impatient with them : so certain it is that all sides are to blame.”—Baxter’s “Sacriligious Desertion of the Holy Ministry rebuked,” p. 24. Edition of 1672.

“You will not give them the Lord’s supper, unless they take it kneeling; (which I think they may do, but they think otherwise;) you will not baptize their children without the transient sign of the cross, as a dedicating sign, &c. If in this case they choose a distinct church assembly, and pastor, and mode of worship, what harm is this to you, or any one? and why should it break love and peace?”—*Ibid.*, p. 15.

“I am for communion with all Christians, as far as they separate not from Christ; and I hate the false accusing of any church, as if it were none, or its communion unlawful. I can be but in one place at once; but in heart I join with all Christians on earth, except in sin; and locally I join where I see greatest reason for it, preferring that which I judge most agreeable to God’s word, so far as I may without greater hurt.”—Baxter’s “Second Defence of the Nonconformists,” p. 51. Edition of 1681.

“If one church will use forms of prayer, and another will not; one will baptize infants, and another will delay it; they are differences that must be borne, where love and reason cannot heal them without breach of charity, concord, or communion.” “We have all naturally a Pope born in us; and when men have never so much talked against Popery and Prelacy, too many censure or run away from all who are not of their way.”—Baxter’s “Sacriligious Desertion of the Holy Ministry,” pp. 107, 108. Edition of 1672.

*Note BB, page 448.*

“SEPARATION and schism are not of equal extent. There may be a separation or secession where there is no schism; for schism is always a sin, but separation may be a duty, as the separation of the Protestants from the Church of Rome. Moreover, there may be schism where there is

no separation. The violation of unity, or the causing of divisions, may be not only by withdrawing, but by any causing of others to withdraw from the communion of the church, or by the undue casting or keeping of others out of the church, or by making of any breaches in religion contrary to the unity of the Spirit."

"As holy love is the life and soul of church-unity, so that aversion and opposition which is contrary to love is that which animates the sin of schism, and is as it were the heart-root of it. Whosoever maintains love, and makes no breach therein, and whose dissenting or withdrawing from a church is no other than what may stand with love in its extent, is no schismatic."—Corbet's "Point of Church Unity and Schism Discussed," pp. 21, 22. Edition of 1679.

*Note CC, page 458.*

"THE last apostolical legacy may be said to be a recommendation to unity. Those who break the peace and concord of the church upon insufficient grounds, or from unworthy motives, incur heavy blame. Union in large societies cannot subsist without authority, and authority implies obedience: ecclesiastical authority is held very high in the writings of the New Testament; and though it may be said it was then administered by persons inspired, yet the church always possesses, and must possess, that wholesome, lawful power, inherent in all communities, to make laws for her members, which they are in conscience bound to obey. A Christian society will fall into contemptible and ruinous disorder, if there is no sufficient control over vain, tumultuous, and refractory spirits, who differ upon frivolous pretexts, or who plead conscience to indulge their humour, like spoiled children, and upon indifferent matters fly into opposition, such as would be deemed absurd and unbearable in secular business."—Collinson's "Observations on the His-



tory of the Preparation for the Gospel," p. 407. Edition of 1830.

"A man that will, of a troublesome zeal, suppose himself bound to be a continual disquiet to that church where the occasion is may be cast out from that church, and incapable of joining with any of that same opinion and way, and not with others that are of his own way and opinion."—Baxter's "Disputations of Right to Sacraments," p. 282. Edition of 1658.

*Note DD, page 468.*

"THE office of the ministry is an undoubted ordinance of God, to continue in the church to the end of the world. No man can pretend that they ceased with the apostles ; for it is God's will that ordinary fixed presbyters shall be ordained in every church ; (Acts xiv. 23 ; Titus i. 5 ; 1 Tim. iii. 1 ; 2 Tim. ii. 2 ;) and pastors and teachers are appointed for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to a perfect man. (Eph. iv. 4, 11, 12, 13.) A ministry authorised to disciple the nations, baptize and teach them, is instituted by Christ as King and Saviour, and have His promise to be with them alway to the end of the world. (Matt. xxviii. 18–20.) The same necessity and work continueth ; still souls are born and bred in darkness ; and how shall they be saved without believing ? or believe without hearing ? or hear without preaching ? or we preach without sending ? (Rom. x. 13–15.) There is a clearer word in the Gospel for the ministry than the magistracy ; though enough for both."—Baxter's "Church History of Bishops," pp. 460, 461. Edition of 1680.

*Note EE, page 476.*

"EPISCOPAL government, managed in conjunction with

presbyters, presbyteries, and synods, is not contrary to the rule of Scripture, or the example of the primitive church, but most agreeable to both."—Leighton's "Theological Lectures," p. 400. Edition of 1763.

"With the bishop, who was the chief president,.....the rest of the dispensers of the word and sacraments joined in the common government of the church."—Ussher's "Reduction of Episcopacy unto the Form of Synodical Government received in the ancient Church," Works, vol. xii., p. 532. 8vo. edition.

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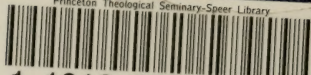
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